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By Thomas W. Parsons

POEMS. 16mo.

TRANSLATION OF DANTE'S DIVINA COMMEDIA INTO ENGLISH VERSE. 16mo, $1.50.

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

POEMS

BY

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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1893

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Dr. Parsons was singularly indifferent to his repute as a poet. For poetry and for his own poetic expression he cared greatly; the permanence of his productions he left not indeed to chance but to the inherent vitality there might be in his verse, taking little pains to secure an audience, and none at all in his later years to making such collections and arranging his poems in such order as would insure the attention of a world distracted by the demand of writers great and small. In 1854 a volume of his poems was issued by Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, and in 1872 another general collection, "The Shadow of the Obelisk and Other Poems," by Messrs. Hatchards, in London. He contented himself otherwise with printing, not publishing, thin volumes of verse like "The Magnolia," and "The Old House at Sudbury," which now and then found their way into the bookstores, but more frequently were the cherished possession of his personal friends. He made use, too, of magazines and newspapers and

printed leaflets containing poems of special occasions or having some immediate interest for himself and his circle of friends.

It is from these varied sources that the present volume has been gathered. It does not aim at completeness. Dr. Parsons himself, though frequently urged by the present publishers to make a definitive edition of his poems, could never be induced to set about the task. Had he done so he would most certainly have swept aside a good many of his verses, for he was a most fastidious critic of his own work after his passion or his playful impulse had found expression. Therefore the principle herein adopted cannot be foreign from his own purpose; the volume is a somewhat representative selection, covering indeed the greater portion of his lyrical writing, but by no means complete. It will be understood, of course, that this volume gathers Dr. Parsons's verses alone. The companion volume containing his translation of Dante and a brief biographical sketch by Miss Guiney represents the great poetic passion of the man.

4 Park Street, Boston,
October, 1893.

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POEMS

ON A BUST OF DANTE

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was, — but a fight;
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,
To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here, — this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
The scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

DIRGE

FOR ONE WHO FELL IN BATTLE

Room for a Soldier! lay him in the clover;
He loved the fields, and they shall be his cover;
Make his mound with hers who called him once
her lover:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Bear him to no dismal tomb under city churches;
Take him to the fragrant fields, by the silver
birches,
Where the whippoorwill shall mourn, where the
oriole perches:
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Where the bee will dine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the rain will rain upon it.

Busy as the bee was he, and his rest should be the
clover;

Gentle as the lamb was he, and the fern should be
his cover ;
Fern and rosemary shall grow my soldier's pillow
over :
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Sunshine in his heart, the rain would come full
often
Out of those tender eyes which evermore did soften :
He never *could* look cold till we saw him in his
coffin.
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Plant the lordly pine upon it,
Where the moon may stream upon it,
And memory shall dream upon it.

" Captain or Colonel," — whatever invocation
Suit our hymn the best, no matter for thy station, —
On thy grave the rain shall fall from the eyes of a
mighty nation !
Long as the sun doth shine upon it
Shall glow the goodly pine upon it,
Long as the stars do gleam upon it
Shall memory come to dream upon it.

A DIRGE

Slowly tread, and gently bear
One that comes across the wave,
From the oppression of his care,
To the freedom of the grave;

From the merciless disease,
Wearing body, wasting brain,
To the rest beneath the trees, —
The forgetting of all pain;

From the delicate eye and ear,
To the rest that shall not see;
To the sleep that shall not hear,
Nor feel the world's vulgarity.

Bear him, in his leaden shroud,
In his pall of foreign oak,
To the uncomplaining crowd,
Where ill word was never spoke.

Bear him from life's broken sleep —
  Dreams of pleasure, dreams of pain,
Hopes that tremble, joys that weep,
  Loves that perish, visions vain —

To the beautiful repose,
  Where he was before his birth;
With the ruby, with the rose,
  With the harvest, earth in earth!

Bring him to the body's rest,
  After battle, sorely spent,
Wounded, but a welcome guest
  In the Chief's triumphal tent.

UPON A LADY SINGING

Oft as my lady sang for me
That song of the lost one that sleeps by the sea,
Of the grave and the rock and the cypress-tree,
Strange was the pleasure that over me stole,
For 't was made of old sadness that lives in my soul.

So still grew my heart at each tender word,
That the pulse in my bosom scarcely stirred,
And I hardly breathed, but only heard:
Where was I? — not in the world of men,
Until she awoke me with silence again.

Like the smell of the vine, when its early bloom
Sprinkles the green lane with sunny perfume,
Such a delicate fragrance filled the room:
Whether it came from the vine without,
Or arose from her presence, I dwell in doubt.

Light shadows played on the pictured wall
From the maples that fluttered outside the hall,

And hindered the daylight, — yet, ah! not all;
Too little for that all the forest would be, —
Such a sunbeam she was to me!

When my sense returned, as the song was o'er,
I fain would have said to her, "Sing it once more;"
But soon as she smiled my wish I forbore:
Music enough in her look I found,
And the hush of her lip seemed sweet as the sound.

TO FRANCESCA

Sing Waller's lay,
"Go, lovely rose," or some old song,
That should I play
Feebly, thy voice may make me strong
With loving memories cherished long.

Sing "Drink to me"
Or "Take, oh, take those lips away,"
Some strain to be
When I am gone and thou art gray,
Remembered of a happier day.

A solemn air,
A melody not loud but low,
Suits whitening hair;
And when the pulse is beating slow
The music's measure should move so.

The song most sweet
Is that which lulls, not thrills the ear;
So, love, repeat
For one who counteth silence dear
That which to silence is most near.

SONG

Strike me a note of sweet degrees —
Of sweet degrees —
Like those in Jewry heard of old;
My love, if thou wouldst wholly please,
Hold in thy hand a harp of gold,
And touch the strings with fingers light,
And yet with strength as David might —
As David might.

Linger not long in songs of love —
In songs of love;
No serenades nor wanton airs
The deeper soul of music move;
Only a solemn measure bears
With rapture that shall never cease
My spirit to the gates of peace —
The gates of peace.

So feel I when Francesca sings —
Francesca sings —
My thoughts mount upward; I am dead

To every sense of vulgar things,
And on celestial highways tread,
With prophets of the olden time —
Those minstrel kings, the men sublime —
The men sublime.

SONG FOR SETTING

INSCRIBED TO KARL PFLUEGER, MELODIST

Oh, marry me to music soon!
My lover's lay kept saying, saying.
Let some fine harmonist give tune
To my sweet words; and I, obeying,

Laid in my master's hand the song
For him to grace with gentle measure,
And give it life to linger long
In maidens' hearts, a joy and treasure.

And now my song seems new to me
That all day long I 'm singing, singing,
And all the summer by the sea
My master's measure shall be ringing.

Our brook shall stay to list the lay
That Master Karl to music married,
And then go bounding to the bay
All the more bright for having tarried.

VIVA LA MUSICA

Our house, that long in darkness dwelt,
And long in silence, day by day,
Before the mountain snows could melt,
While yet the world was bleak and gray,
Received an impulse from the play
Of sudden fingers on the strings,
That made the new-born meadows gay
With magic touch, as 't were the Spring's.

The melancholy frog no more
Shall pipe his burden, twanging shrill;
The oriole gives his matins o'er,
No song-bird now hath any skill;
Even that reproachful whippoorwill
That stirred such memories in my heart
Is hushed, — yet comes, a listener still,
Nightly, to hear Cordelia's art.

O virgins of the silver lute!
O goddess of the golden chord!
And thou great master of the flute,
Pan, of the reeds acknowledged lord!

Troop hither, and your best reward
  For your old music, in the days
When young Apollo was your king,
  Shall be to peep from yonder bays,
And hear your latest scholar sing.

PIERI, VALE!

WHAT god it was I cannot say,
  But one there was, when Jove was king,
Who, wandering by some Grecian bay,
Picked up a vacant shell that lay
  Bleached on the shore, a dry, unsavory thing.

Nor is my memory well informed
  (No Lemprière 's at hand to blab)
What tenant had this mansion warmed ;
Something with which the Ægean swarmed,
  Something of lobster-kind, perhaps, or crab.

But he, this cunning child of heaven,
  Trimmed it according to his wish,
Crossed it with fibres, — three, or seven,
Or, as Pausanias thinks, eleven, —
  And gave a language to the poor, dead fish.

At once, the house, which, even when filled
  By its old habitant, was dumb,
Now, as the immortal artist willed
A little sea-Odèon trilled,
  And trembled low to the celestial thumb.

Enraptured with his new invention,
  Up soared he to the blissful seat,
And, having caught even Jove's attention,
Yea, calmed a family dissension,
  Went serenading through the starry street.

With us, the story 's the reverse:
  Our souls are born already strung,
But, 'twixt the cradle and the hearse,
Creeps a change o'er us — for the worse!
  The heart hath music only when 't is young.

For soon there comes a sordid god,
  Who snaps the precious chords of sound,
And leaves the soul an empty pod,
A yellow husk, — a dull, hard clod,
  A faded shell, in which no voice is found,

Save when some bold but faltering hand,
  That dares to strike the tyrant Time,
Tries his first impulse to command,
And, where he loftily had planned,
  Spends the last ebbings of his youth in rhyme.

MUSICA TRIONFANTE

In the storm, in the smoke, in the fight, I come
To bring thee strength with my bugle and drum.
My name is Music, — and when the bell
Rings for the dead man, I rule the knell;
And when the wrecked mariner hears in the blast
The fog-bell sound, — it was I who passed.
The poets have told you how I, a young maid,
Came fresh from the gods to the myrtle shade,
And thence by a power divine I stole
To where the waters of Mincius roll;
Then down by Clitumnus and Arno's vale
I wandered, passionate and pale,
Until I found me at sacred Rome,
Where one of the Medici gave me a home.
Leo, great Leo, he worshiped me,
And the Vatican stairs for my foot were free;
And now I am come to your glorious land,
Give me great welcome with heart and hand.
Remember Beethoven — I gave him his art —
And Sebastian Bach and superb Mozart:

Join them in my worship; and when the swell
Of their mighty organs hath laid a spell
On every sense, and thy cares are drowned,
Hear the voices of heaven through the men
heaven hath crowned.

THE INTELLECTUAL REPUBLIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BOSTON LYCEUM, NOVEMBER 19, 1840

Already graced with Bravery's martial crown,
Our young republic pants for fresh renown;
When idle Prowess finds no scene for fame,
Some loftier glory beams, in Virtue's name,
Reposing Valor wantons in a trance
Of calm philosophy or gay romance;
Refinement blooms, and Wisdom claims the wreath
Which silver hairs, not scars, are hid beneath.
In every state, as one heroic age,
One intellectual, stands on history's page.
Now maddening nations quit their tranquil farms
To swell the fight — a universe in arms!
Now Strife, his work beginning to abhor,
Bids tired Augustus close the gates of War;
Hushed is the trump — a milder sway succeeds,
Now peaceful Georgics wake the Mantuan reeds.
Such days beheld the Stoic porch arise,
With Academia — garden of the wise!
Then Epicurus taught his gentle train
The dulcet musings of a doubtful brain,

And Plato — bee-lipped oracle ! — beguiled
His loved Lyceum, listening like a child.
Thus eras change, and such a change is ours ;
Rough Mars gives way to April's promised flowers :
Forth springs the godlike intellect, unchained ;
Guard it, good angels ! keep it unprofaned ;
Guide it, lest, lured by offices or gold,
Its rights be bartered, and its empire sold.
Now books accomplish what the sword began,
Wide spreads the rule of educated man,
No let, no limit, to its march sublime,
In space, but ocean — in duration, Time.
So swift its course, some prophet may contend
Its very progress bodes a speedy end :
No ! like Niagara's changeless current driven,
It moves, yet stays, eternal as the heaven :
That mighty torrent, as it flows to-day,
Forever flows, but never flows away ;
The waves you gazed at yesterday are gone,
Yet the same restless deluge thunders on.
As crumble Custom's mouldering chains with rust,
Power's gilded idol tumbles to the dust.
Tradition totters from her cloudy throne,
And all the impostures of the past are known.
Hardly can *we* lend credence to the tale

Of their long woes who first rent error's veil:
What royal spite, what curses from the Church,
Awed the pale scholar in his cloistered search;
How many from themselves their visions hid,
Or wandered exiles, outcast and forbid,
Like Dante, scaling with dejected tread
A tyrant's stairs, to taste his bitter bread!
Think how Columbus toiled, through years of pain,
For leave to try the secret of the main;
Yet the dream dawned, and gave, in spite of Rome,
Spain a new world, and half mankind a home.

Unhappy days! when they who read the stars
Oft only saw them through their dungeon bars:
Our tutored minds less dangerous ways explore, —
The immortal pioneers have gone before.
As the worn bark, no more to storms a sport,
Just makes the headland of her opening port,
New perils then awake the master's dread,
Anxious he walks, and eyes the frequent lead;
But, if the pilot come, he yields the helm,
And stands a subject in his floating realm,
The veteran's nod his mariners obey,
And wind confiding on their shoaly way.
Like them we travel, safely gliding by
Opinion's thousand wrecks that round us lie.

Not thus were you, ye leader spirits! taught
Your pathway, beaconed through the wilds of thought:
For you no Newton yet had poised the world,
No sage La Place heaven's glittering leaves unfurled,
But each suspicion of the truth was born
A dim conjecture, heralding the morn.
Thus from his height bewildered Kepler strayed,
To toy with vain Chaldea's mystic trade,
And sought in yon blue labyrinth to behold
Man's life and fortunes lustrously foretold.
Hence Danish Tycho's heavenly city swarmed
With crude ideas and fantasies deformed.
Yet sparely blame! nor be extreme to mark
Their faulty light, when all was else — how dark!

But now the Mind, from ancient falsehood woke,
Abjures old Superstition's rotten yoke:
No wrathful threat in Nature's thunder fears,
No fate predicted by the falling spheres.
All childish fables, Fancy's fond pretense,
Fade from the cold arithmetic of Sense:
No jocund Fauns through copse or prairie rove,
No dripping Naiads haunt the godless grove;
And had no holier new Religion given
More certain tokens of a purer heaven,

By fount and rock and by the sounding shore,
Nothing were left to dream of and adore.
Now to Truth's courts, a never-faltering throng,
Thy torch, O Science! lights and leads along.
No sluggard sons this age of labor owns,
In earth's great workshop solitary drones,
But every mind the general task must share,
Brave the long toil, and mingle in the care,
In love with Knowledge, that alone can be
Our country's hope — sole safeguard of the free.

ADDRESS

FOR THE OPENING OF THE BOSTON THEATRE,
SEPTEMBER 11, 1854

WELCOME, bright eyes, that make our splendors pale:
Ye reverend heads! you generous hands! all hail!
And thou, proud city! to thy triumphs past
Add this to-night, nor let it be thy last;
Be it thy glory to the coming age
To have transmitted no adulterate stage,
That aftertimes may count this beauteous dome
Dear as the hearthstone of a father's home.

Back, airy beings! people of the brain!
Ye kingly shadows, in your graves remain!
Stay, you weird women! wait the fatal bell!
Thou master of the charm, suspend the spell!
Be not impatient on our scene to burst;
You shall be summoned, but your herald first.

Souls of dead bards! that served our ancient art,
Poets! who largely read the human heart,
Tell us why man, when life serenely glides,

Loves the fierce motion that disturbs the tides!
What god impels him, now his land is free,
To play the hero that he cannot be?
What strong illusion, native in his breast,
Made action charm him in his day of rest?

When arms and arsenals are idle shows,
And navies playthings for the world's repose,
The heart, like Nemi, never known to stir,
Becomes a mirror of the things that were:
Then grows the wish, and then is given the power,
To be and feel beyond Life's little hour.
The soldier Æschylus, at such a time,
From the dark realm of passion and of crime,
Called back those mighty shades to walk the earth,
And made them deathless by a second birth.
When all rapt Athens, in that early day,
Sat in the sunshine, at the solemn play;
When to the music of a single flute
The verse was uttered that for us is mute;
When through the orchestra, with slow advance,
The Dorian measure led the choral dance, —
Cold was that soul — oh! dead as Lethe's fen —
That did not fight at Salamis again.

But long ere this, when Bacchus was divine,
At the mad vintage, where the new-made wine

Fired the rude revellers, the learned say
First rose th' uncouth resemblance of a play:
What time Arion of the Lesbian isle
To the wild chorus gave a graver style.
The years are distant, and the light is dim,
Yet hark! the echo of a tragic hymn:
Lo! the fell Mœnads with their visage smeared,
And men made satyrs by the mask and beard.

Such rites have been where now this temple stands:
The savage dramas of the Indian bands;
Near the blue lake and by the midnight fire,
See the red artist and the naked choir!
When the great Sachem with his Pequod court
After the fray assembled at the sport —
See! — 't was but yesterday — their dance describe
The hunt, the war, the triumph of their tribe:
These too were actors, but their show is done;
Their last spectator was the setting sun.

In Charles's days, when tragedy was mean,
Once the light Muse went slipshod on the scene;
Was Charles alone at fault? historian, tell —
We love the sturdy Puritan too well;
What though the drama drooped beneath his ban,

Spite of the bigot we revere the man;
What though he left polluted arts behind,
He brought his sword, his Bible, and his mind.

Something of that austerity be yours,
Since Folly loves what easy Taste endures;
Let our purged altar and its blameless priest
Honor the three-hilled city of the East!
That to the wise our theatre may seem
A nobler school, a loftier Academe!
And Shakespeare's mind, transplanted to the shore
Whose rocks are gold, whose sands are shining ore,
(Or far as Freedom's onward march may draw
Arts without arms, and without conquest, Law),
A sacred well! from whose o'erflowing brink
Each generation in its turn may drink;
So shall your children thank you, not alone
For wealth of empire grasping every zone,
But write these words on Memory's grateful page,
Sons of the Pilgrims! you redeemed our stage.

ADDRESS

TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF THE PLAYERS' CLUB IN NEW YORK, DECEMBER 31, 1888

The speaker advances with a chaplet bearing a label on which is written the name of BOOTH

LET us crown Edwin. Though he wear
The crown already of his Art,
Grateful Manhattan's mighty mart
May well a civic garland spare
For one who hath deserved so well
Of his whole country, carrying far
And wide the great enchanter's spell,
Under whose thralldom we all are.
Yet not alone his laurel twine
With civil oak. The poet's bays
And critic's ivy should combine
Besides, to speak our actor's praise.
For he hath educated men,
(Who knew none other lore but this),
Making past history live again, —
A lofty mark which many miss!

Through him those rough lads of the West
That never slept beneath a roof,
Men from the mountains, tempest-proof,
Gold-hunters, rugged and untaught,
Feel Romeo's passion fill their breast,
Or Hamlet's wisdom swell their thought.
Even the great Marlborough, we are told,
More history learned from Shakespeare's page
Then Holinshed's; nor seems it bold
To guess that many a sapient sage,
As well as soldier, may have known
More of mankind from gifted bards
Than chroniclers, though he had grown
Gray o'er the schoolroom's history-cards.

TO THE PLAYERS

Players! I ask your benison for this wreath:
Oh, read the name that here is writ beneath
Approvingly, as of all words the one
Most fit to glorify the sire and son!
Perchance the coming centuries will say,
There was a home by Massachusetts Bay,
Whence children came to keep that flame alive
Which Edwin kindled, and may long survive
Till each America, both North and South,
Shall speak him honor with a single mouth,

And England's language from the Arctic main
To San Rosario's watch-tower hold one reign.

TO MR. BOOTH

Tragedian, teacher, take the crown
  Where love her myrtle with our laurel blends:
  These portals open to large troops of friends,
But I behold, to cherish thy renown,
  A line, aye stretching, as in Banquo's glass,
  Of thousands coming after these do pass.

PROEM

Down by the sea, beside the pilgrim dunes,
Down by the low strand where the waves have strife,
We wove ourselves a little roll of runes,
To lull our spirits from the jar of life:
Sometimes the north-wind cut us like a knife,
Sometimes wild Euros blinded us with spray,
But always Ocean with his changing tunes
Made measure with each cadence of our lay.

And one day, wandering vacant on the strand,
A little child, whose name shall yet be known,
Culling strange forms and pebbles from the sand,
Put in my hand a wonderful red stone; —

A jasper fragment of some ancient rock,
Shaped like the Sphinx, expression just the same, —
A Nubian face, as 't were a half-hewn block
Before the finish of the master came.

The heavy head-gear, with its fold and fall,
Recalling Dante's hood; the drowsy lid,
As if weighed down with frequent funeral,
Dead to the presence as a pyramid;

A look of quietude, that seemed to say,
"Labor no more! the time is come for rest;
Thy life is with past people and the day
Slow closing on thy vision in the west.

"Of labors profitless in days gone by
There lives no record; nor shall there be end
Of toils for men hereafter. Only I
Have done with labor and would be thy friend."

"Labor no more!" (The jasper head to me
Spoke in the pauses of the noisy night.)
"Labor no more! Thou hear'st the restless sea:
The world's great work is doing, with might, with might!

"Ships pass and vanish, laden with desire,
Carrying to every clime their trade and cares,
And black sea-chariots with their freight of fire
The breath of water o'er the water bears:

"The mowers in the marsh, with scythe and wains,
Their aftermath are rescuing from the tide,
And the moss-gatherers from the autumn rains
Their ocean-harvest under canvas hide:

"And boys are in the woods for nuts and birds, —
Plenty of people doing earthly things!
But for thyself, the wisest of all words
Is 'Work no longer.' 'T is the Sphinx that sings."

PILGRIM'S ISLE

THERE fell a charm upon the deep,
A spell upon the silent shore;
The boats, like lily-pads asleep,
Lay round me upon ocean's floor.

O weary world of noise and strife,
O cities, full of gold and guile,
How small a part ye make of life
To one that walks on Pilgrim's Isle!

I watched the Gurnet's double star,
Like Jove and Venus side by side,
And on the smooth waves gleaming far
Beheld its long reflection ride.

My days of youth are almost flown,
And yet, upon a night like this,
Love will not let my heart alone;
Back comes the well-remembered bliss.

Oft in thy golden locks a gleam
Of other days illumes my brain,

And in thy hand's soft touch I seem
To feel my boyhood born again.

Ah, dearest, all will soon be o'er!
I see my sunset in thy smile;
It lingers longest on the shore,
Th' enchanted shore of Pilgrim's Isle.

DOWN BY THE SHORE IN DECEMBER

They come and go ; their shadows pass
  Beyond the bound where blue and brine
Kiss, and the orient clouds amass
  White piles above the horizon's line.

Some of yon vessels will return,
  And some shall never touch their port !
Full many hearts that in them burn
  Will find life's voyage all too short.

Inconstant Ocean ! who canst look
  So calm, with murder in thy frown,
For whom those meadows I forsook,
  And all the allurements of the town,

I did not feel, till here I dwelt,
  How terrible the mighty main,
Nor think how bright Orion's belt
  Gleams nightly on thy drowned and slain.

Oh, give me back my Wayland meads,
  Where Sudbury's loitering eddies glide,

And one long line of lilies leads
My skiff to Concord's harmless tide!

There let me with protecting woods
Shield my reposing age, afar
From the wild fury of the floods,
To watch in peace that evening star.

THE PEOPLE OF THE DEEP

NEVER hath navigator found
A nook where mortals have not been;
The floods are full, — all seas abound
With myriads of our kin;
And more humanity lies hidden
Fathomless leagues below the surge,
Than o'er its surface, tempest-ridden,
Their peopled navies urge.

Becalmed at midnight, on the deep,
Soon as our second watch was set,
On the damp deck I dropped asleep,
All troubles to forget;
But in my brain, that would not slumber,
Loved forms and lovely faces thronged,
Friends past my power to name or number,
And some to heaven belonged.

But one sweet shape, of beauty strange,
Broke my bright vision with a kiss;
I started, — ah! the bitter change,
From blessed dreams to this!

For, ah! how silent, dark, and lonely
These melancholy deserts are;
No life, save yon tired helmsman only,
Nor light, save here and there a star.

The drowsy mariner's dull tread
Is the sole sound that wakes mine ears;
How hushed! how desolate and dead
Creation's void appears!
"Thou dumb, thou lonely, lonely ocean!"
Chilled by my fancies, I began,—
"Fearful in stillness as in motion,
Thou art no place for man!

"Earth's wildernesses, everywhere,
Teem with some records of our race;
Even waste Palenque's fragments bear
Life's annals on their face.
But you, ye solitary waters!
What memories can ye recall?
Better to speak of crime and slaughters
Than tell no tale at all.

"Hark! to that heavy-breathing sound,
That seems the moaning of the sea,
Or of some whale on whose own ground
Rude trespassers are we.

This is Leviathan's dominion,
Where man is rash to stray;
Ah, might I borrow but thy pinion,
Swift sea-gull! for a day,

"This element, for monsters made,
Full swiftly would I leave behind,
And friends amid the forest shade
In gentler creatures find."
Thus musing, sleep again stole o'er me,
And voices, in my second dream,
Came from a throng which rose before me, —
"How falsely dost thou deem!

"Behold! thy brethren fill the waves;
All the great gulfs are amply stored."
And, lo! from forth their coral caves
The ocean dwellers poured.
"We are the people of the waters!"
Faintly they gurgled in mine ear;
"Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters,
Old age and youth are here."

The scaly multitudes that swarm
In the green shelter of the bay,
Chased by the fury of the storm,
Less numerous were than they.

They came in armies, thickly crowding,
Fleshless and dripping, bleached and bare;
Sea-plants their bony bosoms shrouding,
Sands glistening in their hair.

"See! see!" they cried, "what legions strew
The sparkling pavement of the brine!
Our ancient universe below
Is populous as thine.
But wheresoe'er war's banners flying
Have brought the fleets of England's host,
There, foe by foe, together lying,
Our nations cluster most.

"Many and large our cities are,
Wide scattered over ocean's floor;
Some of us dwell near Trafalgar,
And some at Elsinore.
Some that were enemies, now brothers,
Linger about the immortal isle
Of Grecian Salamis, and others
Rest in the freshness of the Nile."

"Home! home! poor spectres," I replied,
"Till the seas dry at trump of doom;
Earth and her waters, far and wide,
Are only one huge tomb.

Till now I thought the main's chief treasure
Was pearls and heaps of jewels rare;
But, ah! what wealth, beyond all measure,
In mine own shape lies there!"

Then, musing on the valor, worth,
And beauty dwelling in the deep,
And the mean brood that God's good earth
In their possession keep,
I almost wished my parting minute
Might find me somewhere on the wave,
That I might join the brave within it,
And no man dig my grave.

MARY BOOTH

What shall we do now, Mary being dead,
Or say or write that shall express the half?
What can we do but pillow that fair head,
And let the Spring-time write her epitaph? —

As it will soon, in snowdrop, violet,
Wind-flower and columbine and maiden's tear;
Each letter of that pretty alphabet,
That spells in flowers the pageant of the year.

She was a maiden for a man to love;
She was a woman for a husband's life;
One that has learned to value, far above
The name of love, the sacred name of wife.

Her little life-dream, rounded so with sleep,
Had all there is of life, except gray hairs, —
Hope, love, trust, passion and devotion deep;
And that mysterious tie a Mother bears.

She hath fulfilled her promise and hath passed;
Set her down gently at the iron door!
Eyes look on that loved image for the last:
Now cover it in earth, — her earth no more.

HER EPITAPH

THE handful here, that once was Mary's earth,
Held, while it breathed, so beautiful a soul,
That, when she died, all recognized her birth,
And had their sorrow in serene control.

"Not here! not here!" to every mourner's heart
The wintry wind seemed whispering round her bier;
And when the tomb-door opened, with a start
We heard it echoed from within, — "Not here!"

Shouldst thou, sad pilgrim, who mayst hither pass,
Note in these flowers a delicater hue,
Should spring come earlier to this hallowed grass,
Or the bee later linger on the dew, —

Know that her spirit to her body lent
Such sweetness, grace, as only goodness can;
That even her dust, and this her monument,
Have yet a spell to stay one lonely man, —

Lonely through life, but looking for the day
When what is mortal of himself shall sleep,
When human passion shall have passed away,
And Love no longer be a thing to weep.

LOUISA'S GRAVE

Deep in the city's noisy heart
A sacred spot there lies ;
Amid the tumult, yet apart,
And shut from worldly eyes.

There, just beyond the chapel shade,
Hid in a clovered mound,
Enough of innocence is laid
To sanctify the ground.

Born, as the violets are, in May,
With song of birds she came,
And when she sighed her soul away,
The season was the same.

It seemed in heaven benignly meant
To give this virgin birth
When all things beautiful are sent
To bless the budding earth.

But if her birth befitted then
The spring-time and the bloom,

Why, when that gladness came again,
  Why went she to the tomb?

Oh, let not impious grief accuse
  Kind Nature of a wrong!
Her form in flowers and fragrant dews
  Shall be exhaled ere long.

Her beauty was akin to them;
  Their elements combined
To shape the young, consummate stem,
  Whose blossom was her mind.

And now the blossom is with God;
  Soon shall the sun and showers
Wake from the slumber of the sod
  All that was ever ours.

No weary winter's frozen sleep,
  Under the torpid snows,
Her undecaying frame can keep
  In the clay's cold repose;

For all her mortal part shall melt,
  In other forms to rise,
Before her spirit shall have dwelt
  One summer in the skies.

TO A YOUNG GIRL DYING

WITH A GIFT OF FRESH PALM-LEAVES

THIS is Palm Sunday: mindful of the day,
I bring palm branches, found upon my way:
But these will wither; thine shall never die, —
The sacred palms thou bearest to the sky!
Dear little saint, though but a child in years,
Older in wisdom than my gray compeers!
We doubt and tremble, — *we*, with bated breath,
Talk of this mystery of life and death:
Thou, strong in faith, art gifted to conceive
Beyond thy years, and teach us to believe!

Then take my palms, triumphal, to thy home,
Gentle white palmer, never more to roam!
Only, sweet sister, give me, ere thou go'st,
Thy benediction, — for my love thou know'st!
We, too, are pilgrims, traveling towards the shrine:
Pray that our pilgrimage may end like thine!

THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL

Amid the aisle, apart, there stood
A mourner like the rest;
And while the solemn rites were said,
He fashioned into verse his mood
That would not be repressed.

Why did they bring him home,
Bright jewel set in lead?
Oh, bear the sculptor back to Rome,
And lay him with the mighty dead, —
With Adonaïs, and the rest
Of all the young and good and fair,
That drew the milk of English breast,
And their last sigh in Latian air!

Lay him with Raphael, unto whom
Was granted Rome's most lasting tomb;
For many a lustre, many an æon,
He might sleep well in the Panthèon,
Deep in the sacred city's womb,
The smoke and splendor and the stir of Rome.

Lay him 'neath Diocletian's dome,
Blessed Saint Mary of the Angels,
Near to that house in which he dwelt, —
House that to many seemed a home,
So much with him they loved and felt.
We were his guests a hundred times;
We loved him for his genial ways;
He gave me credit for my rhymes,
And made me blush with praise.

Ah! there be many histories
That no historian writes,
And friendship hath its mysteries
And consecrated nights;
Amid the busy days of pain,
Wear of hand, and tear of brain,
Weary midnight, weary morn,
Years of struggle paid with scorn; —
Yet oft amid all this despair,
Long rambles in the autumn days
O'er Appian or Flaminian Ways,
Bright moments snatched from care,
When loose as buffaloes on the wild Campagna
We roved and dined on crust and curds,
Olives, thin wine, and thinner birds,
And woke the echoes of divine Romagna;
And then returning late,

After long knocking at the Lateran gate,
Suppers and nights of gods; and then
Mornings that made us new-born men;
Rare nights at the Minerva tavern,
With Orvieto from the Cardinal's cavern;
Free nights, but fearless and without reproof, —
For Bayard's word ruled Beppo's roof.

O Rome! what memories awake,
When Crawford's name is said,
Of days and friends for whose dear sake
That path of Hades unto me
Will have no more of dread
Than his own Orpheus felt, seeking Eurydice!
O Crawford! husband, father, brother
Are in that name, that little word!
Let me no more my sorrow smother;
Grief stirs me, and I must be stirred.

O Death, thou teacher true and rough!
Full oft I fear that we have erred,
And have not loved enough;
But oh, ye friends, this side of Acheron,
Who cling to me to-day,
I shall not know my love till ye are gone
And I am gray!

Fair women with your loving eyes,
Old men that once my footsteps led,
Sweet children, — much as all I prize,
Until the sacred dust of death be shed
Upon each dear and venerable head,
I cannot love you as I love the dead!

But now, the natural man being sown,
We can more lucidly behold
The spiritual one;
For we, till time shall end,
Full visibly shall see our friend
In all his hand did mould, —
That worn and patient hand that lies so cold!

When on some blessed studious day
To my loved library I wend my way,
Amid the forms that give the Gallery grace
His thought in that pale poet I shall trace, —
Keen Orpheus, with his eyes
Fixed deep in ruddy hell,
Seeking amid those lurid skies
The wife he loved so well, —
And feel that still therein I see
All that was in my Master's thought,
And, in that constant hand wherewith he wrought,
The eternal type of constancy.

Thou marble husband! might there be
More of flesh and blood like thee!

Or if, in Music's festive hall,
I come to cheat me of my care,
Amid the swell, the dying fall,
His genius greets me there.
O man of bronze! thy solemn air —
Best soother of a troubled brain —
Floods me with memories, and again
As thou stand'st visibly to men,
Beloved musician! so once more
Crawford comes back that did thy form restore.

. . . . . .

Well, — *requiescat!* let him pass!
Good mourners, go your several ways!
He needs no further rite, nor mass,
Nor eulogy, who best could praise
Himself in marble and in brass;
Yet his best monument did raise,
Not in those perishable things
That men eternal deem, —
The pride of palaces and kings, —
But in such works as must avail him there,

With Him who, from the extreme
Love that was in his breast,
Said, "Come, all ye that heavy burdens bear,
And I will give you rest!"

"INTO THE NOISELESS COUNTRY"

Into the noiseless country Annie went,
Among the silent people where no sound
Of wheel or voice or implement — no roar
Of wind or billow moves the tranquil air:

And oft at midnight when my strength is spent
And day's delirium in the lull is drowned
Of deepening darkness, as I kneel before
Her palm and cross, comes to my soul this prayer,
That partly brings me back to my content,
"Oh, that hushed forest! — soon may I be there!"

STEUART'S BURIAL

THE bier is ready and the mourners wait,
The funeral car stands open at the gate.
Bring down our brother; bear him gently, too;
So, friends, he always bore himself with you.
Down the sad staircase, from the darkened room,
For the first time, he comes in silent gloom.
Who ever left this hospitable door
Without his smile and warm "good-by," before?
Now we for him the parting word must say
To the mute threshold whence we bear his clay.

The slow procession lags upon the road, —
'T is heavy hearts that make the heavy load;
And all too brightly glares the burning noon
On the dark pageant — be it ended soon!
The quail is piping and the locust sings, —
O grief, thy contrast with these joyful things!
What pain to see, amid our task of woe,
The laughing river keep its wonted flow!
His hawthorns there, his proudly waving corn,
And all so flourishing — and so forlorn!

His new-built cottage, too, so fairly planned,
Whose chimney ne'er shall smoke at his command.

Two sounds were heard, that on the spirit fell
With sternest moral: one the passing bell!
The other told the history of the hour —
Life's fleeting triumph, mortal pride and power.
Two trains there met: the iron-sinewed horse
And the black hearse — the engine and the corse!
Haste on your track, you fiery-wingèd steed!
I hate your presence and approve your speed;
Fly! with your eager freight of breathing men,
And leave these mourners to their march again!
Swift as my wish, they broke their slight delay,
And life and death pursued their separate way.

The solemn service in the church was held,
Bringing strange comfort as the anthem swelled,
And back we bore him to his long repose,
Where his great elm its evening shadow throws, —
A sacred spot! There often he hath stood,
Showed us his harvests and pronounced them good;
And we may stand, with eyes no longer dim,
To watch new harvests and remember him.

Peace to thee, Steuart! — and to us! The All-Wise
Would ne'er have found thee readier for the skies:

In his large love He kindly waits the best,
The fittest mood, to summon every guest;
So in his prime our dear companion went,
When the young soul is easy to repent;
No long purgation shall he now require
In black remorse, in penitential fire;
From what few frailties might have stained his morn
Our tears may wash him pure as he was born.

EPITAPH UPON MY FRIEND, DAVID STEUART ROBERTSON FROM HIS GRAVESTONE AT LANCASTER

Here Steuart sleeps; and should some brother Scot
Wander this way, and pause upon the spot,
He need not ask, now life's poor show is o'er,
What arms he carried, or what plaid he wore:
So small the value of illustrious birth,
Brought to this solemn, last assay of earth!
Yet, unreproved, his epitaph might say
A royal soul was wrapt in Steuart's clay,
And generous actions consecrate his mound,
More than all titles, though of kingly sound.

ON THE DEATH OF DANIEL WEBSTER

TWENTY-FOURTH OF OCTOBER, 1852

Comes there a frigate home? what mighty bark
  Returns with torn, but still triumphant sails?
Such peals awake the wondering Sabbath — hark!
  How the dread echoes die among the vales!

What ails the morning, that the misty sun
  Looks wan and troubled in the autumn air?
Dark over Marshfield! — 't was the minute gun:
  God! has it come that we foreboded there?

The woods at midnight heard an angel's tread;
  The sere leaves rustled in his withering breath;
The night was beautiful with stars; we said,
  "This is the harvest moon," — 't was thine, O
    Death!

Gone, then, the splendor of October's day!
  A single night, without the aid of frost,
Has turned the gold and crimson into gray,
  And the world's glory, with our own, is lost.

A little while, and we rode forth to greet
  His coming with glad music, and his eye
Drew many captives, as along the street
  His peaceful triumph passed, unquestioned, by.

Now there are moanings by the desolate shore
  That are not ocean's; by the patriot's bed
Hearts throb for him whose noble heart no more —

Break off the rhyme, for sorrow cannot stop
  To trim itself with phrases for the ear;
Too fast the tears upon the paper drop:

Fast as the leaves are falling on his bier,
  Thick as the hopes that clustered round his name,
While yet he walked with us, a pilgrim here.

He was our prophet, our majestic oak,
  That, like Dodona's, in Thesprotian land,
Whose leaves were oracles, divinely spoke.

We called him giant, for in every part
  He seemed colossal; in his port and speech,
In his large brain and in his larger heart.

And when his name upon the roll we saw
Of those who govern, then we felt secure,
Because we knew his reverence for the law.

So the young master of the Roman realm
Discreetly thought, we cannot wander far
From the true course, with Ulpian at the helm.

But slowly to this loss our sense awakes;
To know what space it in the forum filled,
See what a gap the temple's ruin makes!

Kings have their dynasties, but not the mind;
Cæsar leaves other Cæsars to succeed,
But Wisdom, dying, leaves no heir behind.

Who now shall stand the regent at the wheel?
Who knows the dread machinery? who hath skill
Our course through oceans unsurveyed to feel?

Her mournful tidings Albion lately sent,
How he, the victor in so many fields,
Fell, but not fighting, in the fields of Kent;

The chief whose conduct in the lofty scene
Where England stood up for the world in arms,
Gave her victorious name to England's queen.

But peaceful Britain knows, amid her grief,
She could spare now the soldier and his sword;
What can our councils do without our chief?

Blest are the peacemakers! — and he was ours,
Winning, by force of argument, the right
Between two kindred, more than rival powers.

Resume the rhyme, and end the funeral strain;
Dying, he asked for song, — he did not slight
The harmony of numbers, — let the main
Sing round his grave great anthems, day and night.

The autumn rains are falling on his head,
The snows of winter soon will shroud the shore,
The spring with violets will adorn his bed,
And summer shall return, — but he, no more!

We have no high cathedral for his rest,
Dim with proud banners and the dust of years;
All we can give him is New England's breast
To lay his head on, — and his country's tears.

EMERSON

O VOICELESS water loitering down
To wed the Assabet and take thy name,
Taciturn stream! from concord, in the town
Where Hawthorne's hawthorns grew to fame,
(And haply one may yet survive!)
Into thy wave receive a pilgrim's tear
For one just passed! partly a poet-soul
And part a priest-one errant from his sphere,
Too large to serve the little for the whole,
To whom the vanished Pans seemed still alive;

Who, shunning steeples and the crowd, to dwell
Remote, in meadows of his boyhood's love,
Turning his back on heaven, as erst on hell,
Meek lover of the good, though under spell,
Found Brahma's blessing in the sinless grove.
A certain space our Master went astray
From the known path, to wander with the rest
Of those who, dazzled by some sundog's ray,
Sincerely fancying they beheld the day
Dawn against nature's order in the West,

Could couple Christ with Gautama, and bound
The Rock of Ages with a dial's round.

Not "over-soul" nor too much learning led
These gentle pagans to their straw-built shed,
But over-hope, gay substitute for truth
When life's denial breaks the dreams of youth;
Hope of some wondrous Counsellor to come
To strike the oracles of Delphi dumb,
And send back Simon to his nets again —
"The fisher" still, but nevermore of men:
Well might this loftiest thinker of them all
Have smiled to find himself their new St. Paul!

He found the way. Men gathered at his grave
In Sleepy Hollow, and the word "forgive"
Was said on bended knee. Fine soul and brave!
If quaint in rhyme, if no logician gave
Laws to thy thinking, inly sweet and wise,
Long in these woodlands may thine image live!
And many a musing Briton's heart
Shall melt, as oft with moistening eyes
He lets his noisy train depart
To linger where,— O sacred art!
In yonder grave thy Druid lies.

ANDREW

Ermine or blazonry, he knew them not,
Nor cloth of gold, for Duty was his Queen ;
But this he knew, — a soul without a spot,
Judgment untarnished, and a conscience clean.

In peace, in war, a worker day and night,
Laborious chieftain ! toiling at his lamp;
The children had the splendor of the fight, —
Home was his battle-field, his room the camp.

Without a wound, without a stain he fell,
But with life rounded, all his acts complete ;
And seldom History will have to tell
Of one whom Cato could more gladly greet.

Among the just his welcome should be warm,
Nor will New England let his memory cease ;
He was our peacemaker, who, 'mid the storm
Of the great conflict, served the Prince of Peace.

EVERETT

So fell our statesman, — for he stood sublime
On that proud pedestal, a people's heart, —
As when some image, through the touch of time,
That long was reverenced in the public mart;
As some tall clock-tower, that was wont to tell
The hour of duty to the young and olden,
With tongue most musical of every bell,
Bends to its base, and is no more beholden!
So fell our Everett: more like some great elm,
Lord of the grove, but something set apart,
That all the tempests could not overwhelm,
Nor all the winters of his seventy years,
But on some peaceful midnight bursts his heart.
And in the morning men behold the wreck,
(Some with gray hairs, who cannot hold their tears),
But in the giant timber find no speck
Nor unsound spot, but only wholesome wood.
No secret worm consuming at the core
The stem that ever seemed so fair and good:
And aged men that knew the tree of yore

When but a sapling, promising full well,
Say to each other, "This majestic plant
Came to full growth ; it made no idle vaunt;
From its own weight, without a flaw, it fell!"

ASPROMONTE

Beauty made glad the day, — and sadness glad ;
So, without sorrow, to the grove we wandered
Where lie the loved ones in their myrtle bed.
Till then I never knew peace-parted souls
Could unto souls on earth give benediction
Of peace like that which they enjoy in heaven.
For surely, as we sat there in the sun,
On the fresh turf, there seemed a "*Pax vobis-cum*"
Descending on us with each dropping leaf ;
And on their graves I think, almost, we laughed,
Recalling words of theirs, and pretty customs,
Until Death seemed, as 't were, a pleasant thing.
And when we mused, "At home we miss them so!"
One said, "They *are* at home, and He is with them
Who said so sweetly, 'Children, come to me!'
And come to me, ye heavy-laden, worn,
And half-spent soldiers of the bitter battle,
And I will nurse you in my hospital.
The hospitality of heaven is mine :

I am the one Physician, — yours forever;
And when your wounds are healed, we dwell as friends
In the same mansion, and in purer air
Than where you came from: that was fraught with peril —
Oh, most destructive! I was also there.' "
At this there seemed a whispering from beneath
A certain mound that bare the name of "Mother;"
And we all heard a voice as plain as this.

THE VOICE

Matters nothing to me now
Who dispraised or praises me;
I am gone where they and thou,
Fondest friend! ere long must be.

Dread thou to severely scan
Blame that is or may have been;
Meeter Judge there is for man
Than his fellow-soul of sin.

I have known in evil hearts
Rays of goodness, here and there;
And the saint, when he departs,
Hath full need of human prayer.

All are brothers ; and the sole
Hope of your hereafter rest
Is that Heaven may bless the whole,
For the One who was the Blest ;

By that word He spake for them
Who had speared the Sinless through,
" Father, spare Thou to condemn
Souls that know not what they do."

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

IN RETURN FOR A TALBOTYPE PICTURE OF VENICE

Poet and friend! if any gift could bring
A joy like that of listening while you sing,
'T were such as this, — memorial of the days,
When Tuscan airs inspired more tender lays;
When the gray Apennine, or Lombard plain,
Sunburnt, or spongy with autumnal rain,
Mingled perchance, as first they met your sight,
Some drops of disappointment with delight;
When, rudely wakened from the dream of years,
You heard Velino thundering in your ears,
And fancy drooped, — until Romagna's wine
Brought you new visions, thousand-fold more fine;
When first in Florence, hearkening to the flow
Of Arno's midnight music, hoarse below,
You thought of home, and recollected those
Who loved your verse, but hungered for your prose,
And, more than all, the sonnets that you made;
Longed for the letters, — ah, too poorly paid!

Thanks for thy boon! I look, and I am there;
The soaring belfry guides me to the square;
The punctual doves, that wait the stroke of one,
Flutter above me and becloud the sun;
'T is Venice! Venice! and with joy I put
In Adria's wave, incredulous, my foot;
I smell the seaweed, and again I hear
The click of oars, the screaming gondolier.
Ha! the Rialto, — Dominic! a boat;
Now in a gondola to dream and float:
Pull the slight cord and draw the silk aside,
And read the city's history as we glide;
For strangely here, where all is strange, indeed,
Not he who runs, but he who swims, may read.
Mark now, albeit the moral make thee sad,
What stately palaces these merchants had!
Proud houses once! — Grimani and Pisani,
Spinelli, Foscari, Giustiniani;
Behold their homes and monuments in one!
They writ their names in water, and are gone.
My voyage is ended, all the round is past, —
See! the twin columns and the bannered mast,
The domes, the steeds, the Lion's wingèd sign,
"Peace to thee, Mark! evangelist of mine!"

Poetic art! reserved for prosy times
Of great inventions and of little rhymes;

For us, to whom a wisely ordering Heaven
Ether for Lethe, wires for wings, has given ;
Whom vapors work for, yet who scorn a ghost,
Amid enchantments disenchanted most ;
Whose light, whose fire, whose messages had been
In blessed Urban's liberal days a sin,
Sure, in Damascus, any reasoning Turk
Would count your Talbotype a sorcerer's work.

Strange power ! that thus to actual presence brings
The shades of distant or departed things,
That calls dead Thebes or Athens up, or Arles,
To show like spectres on the banks of Charles !
But we receive this marvel with the rest ;
Nothing is new or wondrous in the West ;
Life 's all a miracle, — and every age
To the great wonder-book but adds a page.

TO HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

THINK not that this enchanted isle
  Wherein I dwell, some days a king,
Postpones till June its tardy smile,
  And only knows imagined spring.

Not yet my lilies are in bloom;
  But lo! my cherry, bridal-white,
Whose sweetness fills my sunny room,
  The bees, and me, with one delight.

And on the brink of Lanham Brook
  The laughing cowslips catch mine eye,
As on the bridge I stop to look
  At the stray blossoms loitering by.

Our almond-willow waves its plumes
  In contrast with the dark-haired pine,
And in the morning sun perfumes
  The lane almost like summer's vine.

Dear Poet! shouldst thou tread with me,
  Even in the spring, these woodland ways,

Under thy foot the violet see,
And overhead the maple sprays,

Thou mightst forego thy Charles's claim,
To wander by our stream awhile:
So should these meadows grow to fame,
And all the Muses haunt our Isle.

WITH A VOLUME OF KEATS

"His name was writ in water." Yes, too young
The minstrel perished to have earned a name,
To face the cold blight of the critic's tongue,
And his fresh laurels cankered ere they came.

Loved Adonais? martyr to the boon
Which the gods gave, or promised, at his birth!
Think, — in lamenting that he died so soon,
How few such memories live so long on earth!

Full oft must obloquy precede renown:
Ere the saint's picture wear its ring of light,
The living head must feel the thorny crown;
The stars! — where were they, if there came no Night?

Know, love, the poet must not yield alone
Honey and roses, — fire must dwell within;
The fairest flesh must underneath have bone,
The fiercest beast may wear the softest skin.

And something rough and resolute and sour
Must with the sweetness of the soul combine;
For, although gentleness be part of power,
'T is only strength makes gentleness divine.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT BURNS

A LOWLY roof of simple thatch, —
No home of pride, of pomp, and sin, —
So freely let us lift the latch,
The willing latch that says, " Come in."

Plain dwelling this! a narrow door,
No carpet by soft sandals trod,
But just for peasant's feet a floor, —
Small kingdom for a child of God!

Yet here was Scotland's noblest born,
And here Apollo chose to light;
And here those large eyes hailed the morn
That had for beauty such a sight!

There, as the glorious infant lay,
Some angel fanned him with his wing,
And whispered, " Dawn upon the day
Like a new sun! go forth and sing! "

He rose and sang, and Scotland heard;
The round world echoed with his song,
And hearts in every land were stirred
With love, and joy, and scorn of wrong.

Some their cold lips disdainful curled,
Yet the sweet lays would many learn;
But he went singing through the world,
In most melodious unconcern.

For flowers will grow, and showers will fall,
And clouds will travel o'er the sky;
And the great God, who cares for all,
He will not let his darlings die.

But they shall sing in spite of men,
In spite of poverty and shame,
And show the world the poet's pen
May match the sword in winning fame.

THE PENNYROYAL

I MARKED this morning, by the wood,
What way the pennyroyal grew,
Amid the waste of snow that stood
Deep on the path which well I knew;
For every slender stem upreared
Its head within a little round,
In which no leaf nor blade appeared
Save its sweet self from the bare ground.
Its own warm heart had nestled there,
A sheltered home wherein to thrive,
Looking so stately, fresh, and fair,
And where all else was dead, alive.
There, in its charmèd hold serene,
And strong and fragrant as it rose,
It made me think of my soul's queen,
Whom I from all the world had chose.
I thought of one whose heart of love,
Where'er she dwells, her circle finds;
Amid life's frost, who soars above
The weariness of vacant minds;
Who rules her little realm, content,
Not caring for a large applause,

Still finding in all hearts consent
To make her wishes more than laws.
Go, fragrant sprays, and touch her hand,
Or press her lip, if it may be;
May her charmed circle soon expand
Enough to find there room for me!

JULY

Orion dimly burns to-night,
I miss the starry Seven,
And with a mild restraint of light
Arcturus walks the heaven;

The frog pipes feebly in the fen,
The whippoorwill is faint
With chanting to regardless men
His petulant complaint.

So June is over, and the race
Of fire — th' electric fly —
Has come her obsequies to grace,
And welcome in July.

The year's great miracle is done, —
The wonder of the spring, —
And soon the liberal-handed sun
His promised fruit shall bring.

Like some fresh marble, the sublime
Work of immortal hands!

Nature before us, in her prime,
Almost completed stands.

And now the dreaming eye foresees
The sculptor's final stroke,
The golden heaps beneath the trees,
The purpling of the oak.

Ah! might we never forward look
Or be like insects blind,
And in the sunshine and the brook
Sufficient glory find.

THE SCALLOP-SHELL

I CAME to the city that looks towards the sea,
But found on my table no scallop for me!
There were bills from the butcher, and billets from girls,
Things common as pebbles, and precious as pearls;
There were volumes of poetry, volumes of prose, —
By fifty new poets whom nobody knows;
There were things fair to look at, and things sweet to smell,
Engravings and nosegays, — but devil a shell!

Now, my lady, I teased her with many a prayer,
When she went to the ocean, to think of me there,
And to write me a letter at Sudbury Oaks, —
A page full of gossip, and all the best jokes!
This, indeed, she denied me, but whispered, "Write me,
And then I will think of you, down by the sea."
"Oh, think of me *everywhere*, lady — farewell!
But to show that you think of me, send me a shell."

Then I went to the greenwood, — I slept in the shade
Of the midsummer branches that sang serenade ;
There I breathed the fresh meadows, I drank the warm vine,
I tasted the perfume that weeps from the pine,
And I lay by the brookside, a-listening the bee,
And was lulled by the locust, — but thought of the sea ;
I picked the green apples by chance as they fell,
And I fed me with berries, — but sighed for my shell.

Back and forth to the wood with no song on my lips,
Back and forth to the city to gaze on the ships,
To eye the tall vessels and smell of the sea, —
But scallop or cockle comes never to me !
I wander at daybreak, I sit late at night,
And I think many things, but have no heart to write ;
No heart, dear, to speak of ; 't is mute in its cell : —
Could Apollo make music deprived of his shell ?

THE LAST GENTIAN

See! I survive because I bowed my head,
  Hearing the Snow's first footfall in the air;
I felt his cold kiss on my cheek with dread,
  And to my sister said, Beware!
And stooped beneath my bank and let him pass.
Next morn the brook was glass:
My simple sister, in her pride,
Disdained to bow her head, so drooped and died.

Last gentian of the withering year!
  Left for Augusta's hand,
Thou shalt not linger shivering here
  By the bleak north wind fanned,
Until thy blue eye turn to gray,
And from thy lids the lashes fall away.
I will not leave thee, loving thee so well,
  To face the ruin of November's air;
But thou shalt go where Summer still doth dwell,
  Soft light and bird-song, — all things bright or fair, —

And happy thoughts and wise thoughts fed with
books,
And gentle speech, and loving looks
From eyes that still make sunshine everywhere.
For know, thou trembling stem, that not alone
My lady bears the summer in her name :
Her heart is of that season ; and her tone,
When she shall greet thee, — guessing whence it
came, —
And the sweet welcome of her smile
Thy simple soul shall so beguile,
That hadst thou lips as lids, those lips would say
The day I found thee was thy sunniest day.

ON A MAGNOLIA FLOWER

Memorial of my former days!
  Magnolia, as I scent thy breath,
And on thy pallid beauty gaze,
  I feel not far from death.

So much hath happened! and so much
  The tomb hath claimed of what was mine!
Thy fragrance moves me with a touch
  As from a hand divine:

So many dead! so many wed!
  Since first by this Magnolia's tree,
I pressed a gentle hand, and said
  A word no more for me!

Lady, who sendest from the South
  This frail, pale token of the past,
I press the petals to my mouth,
  And sigh — as 't were my last.

Oh, love, we live, but many fell!
The world 's a wreck, but we survive!
Say, rather, still on earth we dwell,
But gray at thirty-five!

TO A LILAC

I

O LILAC, in whose purple well
Youth *in perpetuo* doth dwell,
My fancy feels thy fragrant spell.

II

Of all that morning dewdrops feed,
All flowers of garden, field, or mead,
Thou art the first in childhood's creed.

III

And even to me thy breath, in spring,
Hath power, a little while, to bring
Back to my heart its blossoming.

IV

I seem again, with pupil's pace,
And happy, shining, morning-face,
Bound schoolward, running learning's race.

V

Thou, too, recall'st the tender time,
After my primer, ere my prime,
When love was born and life was rhyme:

VI

My morning ramble, all alone;
My moonlit walk by haunted stone;
My love, that ere it fledged was flown!

VII

At noon, tired out with hateful task,
I fling aside my worldling's mask,
And for my bunch of lilac ask.

VIII

At vesper-time, Celestial tea
Hath no refreshment like to thee,
Whose breath is nourishment for me.

IX

At midnight, when my friends are gone,
And I sit down to ponder on
The day, what it hath lost or won,

X

Thy perfume, like a flageolet
That once, by dark Bolsena's lake,
What time the sun made golden set,
I heard (and seem to hear it yet)!
A thousand memories doth awake
Of busy boyhood's vanished powers;
Of young ambition, flushed with praise;
Of old companions, and of hours
That had the sunshine of whole days;
Of Italy, and Roman ways;
Of Tuscan ladies, courteous, fair,
And kind as beautiful — forbear!
O Memory — those impassioned eyes!
Beware! for that way madness lies!

XI

Sweet lilac, thou art come to June,
And all our orioles are in tune:
Thy doom is — to be withering soon.

XII

And so, farewell! for other flowers
Must have their day; and mortal powers
Cannot love all things at all hours.

XIII

Soon I shall have my flower de luce,
And the proud peony, whose use
It is to teach me pride's abuse.

XIV

For proud am I as proud can be;
But when that crimson gaud I see,
My lilac's memory comes to me.

THE TAKING OF SEBASTOPOL

BY AN AMERICAN, ABOARD THE BOSTON SHIP SULTANA

I

I SAILED by Tenedos, in sight of Troy,
My Homer in my hand, but in my heart
Little remembrance of the past, or joy
In the sad present or the poet's art.

A ship went by that bore my country's name,
"The Great Republic," and a moment's thrill
Flashed through my breast, but vanished as it came,
For in that bark an Iliad was of ill.

A thousand wounded soldiers in her deeps
Lay groaning, bleeding; scarce a man but bore
His deathmark on him. Happy he that sleeps
There where he fell, beside the Pontic shore.

And farther onward as we stretched our sail
Along the sacred Hellespont, a gleam

Came in the night, and mingled with a wail
That seemed the voice of the complaining stream.

Black messengers of death were on the wing,
Like clouds containing tempests, darkly driven
By autumn winds — alas! the news they bring
The doom that took the gentle chief to heaven.

Farewell, brave heart! if not the brightest sword,
Set of true temper, thou wert of the best:
Considerate chieftain, unpresuming Lord,
Fitzroy! good angels bear thee to thy rest!

We mourned with England, if the vulgar swarm
Read of her sorrow with unfriendly smile;
We mourn for them too, for our hearts are warm
Yet with a drop from the ancestral isle.

Tell me thy name, American! What race,
What blood, what accent ruled thee at thy birth?
That when the news comes of a new disgrace
Mak'st England's grief the staple of thy mirth.

II

But we are past Seraglio Point — behold!
Scutari — Pera — cypresses — cáiques —

All the old places — lo! the Horn of Gold!
The Sultan's pride — the glory of the Greeks.

There as we anchored in Byzantium's wave
Beneath the walls of Constantine, a cry
Startled our ears; but 't was a cry that gave
Joy to my soul and gladness to mine eye.

A new gleam breaketh on the dusky night!
Gilding Sophia's, like Saint Peter's dome;
Good news! they have it! God hath sped the right;
An hundred minarets flash it on the foam!

Mount Ida caught the flash and sent it on
To the isle of Lemnos, like that courier-light
Which bright with news of Troy's destruction shone,
And thence it sped to Athos' holy height;

So on to Argos, on to Syracuse,
And, by Hesperia, to the bounteous land
That owes to Gallic hearts its generous juice,
Crimsoning the white face of the sacred strand;

Till to this young half-world, where Hesperus
Hangs a new signal in the nation's eyes,

The lightning sped! and brought the thrill to
us —
A thrill of joy! they have it! the Allies!

For we must joy with England or abjure
The faith in freedom that our fathers had.
Dost thou rejoice not? Wouldst thyself endure
The sway whose downfall does not make thee
glad?

Tell me thy name, that I may set it down,
And say this man — he had a double soul:
Proud of old England and her past renown,
He felt no triumph at Sebastopol!

DECEMBER FOURTEENTH

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF PRINCE ALBERT, 1861

A GLOOM of sickness, gathering in the East,
Spreads over England growing to despair:
Outside the Prince's chamber waits a priest,
With that last medicine for our clay, a prayer.

Not now in state, a royal mother knelt,
Thinking of this day ten dead years ago:
Last night the staghound wailed; perchance it felt
The sense those creatures have of coming woe.

Then England prayed, but not alone the isle
Where England's throne is: on far Western plains
Beyond the seas men prayed, and in strange style
Those dark-eyed Persians in their Hindu fanes.

Then Alexandra, in her secret soul
And silent closet, all alone with One
Who lent her of his own sweet self-control,
Prayed to the Father, imaged in that Son:

"Let not the heir of England, O my God!
Go to the grave without a story meet
For such nobility of soul and birth;
But in that high path which his father trod,
Let him walk ever with unswerving feet,
Until his reign accomplished be on earth.
Thou who art King of kings and all mankind,
Who holdest in thy hand the hearts of kings,
Knowing their purposes and men's desire,
Be to my prayer thy gracious ear inclined,
In this December's darkest hour that brings
Remembrance back of my lord's goodly sire,
Who went to glory with his crown of grace
And spotless record in his princely hand,
And all the kingdom sorrowing at his bier,
That Thou, who ever didst befriend his race,
Wilt spare my husband for this weeping land,
To serve it ever, as thy servant here.

Oh, Albert Edward! let the people say,
In thee we know our Heaven-appointed king,
Because when all were heart-sick with dismay
Hope fanned our fever with her constant wing;

And when the star of life was hardly seen
Under one awful shadow in the storm,

That cloud was broken! and the blue serene
Smiled, — and the star burned steadily and warm,

For England's prayer was heard by Him who made
England so mighty! rich and free and strong.
Oh may that sceptre still be wisely swayed
Which Heaven hath blest so largely and so long!

ST. JAMES'S PARK

I WATCHED the swans in that proud park
Which England's Queen looks out upon;
I sat there till the dewy dark, —
And every other soul was gone;
And sitting silent, all alone,
I seemed to hear a spirit say,
Be calm, the night is, — never moan
For friendships that have passed away.

The swans that vanished from thy sight
Will come to-morrow, at their hour;
But when thy joys have taken flight,
To bring them back no prayer hath power.
'T is the world's law; and why deplore
A doom that from thy birth was fate?
True, 't is a bitter word, "No more!"
But look beyond this mortal state.

Believ'st thou in eternal things?
Thou feelest in thy inmost heart,

Thou art not clay ; thy soul hath wings,
And what thou seest is but part.
Make this thy medicine for the smart
Of every day's distress : be dumb ;
In each new loss thou truly art
Tasting the power of things to come.

VESPERS ON THE SHORE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

At Savona, a very ancient little city on the coast of Genoa, there stands a Madonna by the lighthouse, about twelve feet high, under which are inscribed, in letters of a corresponding size, two Sapphic verses, which are both good Latin and choice Italian, made by Gabriello Chiabrera, "the prince of Italian lyric poets," who was a native of Savona, —

> "In mare irato, in subita procella,
> Invoco te nostra benigna stella."

Valery, the most agreeable of Italian travelers, — a charming and instructive writer, and a pleasant corrective to the sharpness of Forsyth, — remarks that this pretty distich shows the genius and analogy of the two languages, the latter of which can only be well known to those who are conversant with the former.

These verses of Chiabrera's are actually sung, to this day, as the burden of an affecting litany to the Virgin, in daily use among the mariners of the Riviera.

RELIGION'S purest presence was not found,
By the first followers of our Saviour's creed,
In stately fanes where trump and timbrel-sound
Sent up the chorus in a strain agreed,
And where the decked oblation's wail might plead
For guilty man with Abraham's holy seed.

Not in vast domes, horizons hung by men,
Where golden panels fret a marble sky,
And things below look up, and wonder when
Those lifelike seraphim would start and fly!
Not where the heart is mastered by the eye
Will worship, anthem-winged, ascend most high.

But in the damp cathedral of the grove,
Where Nature feels the sanctitude of rest,
Or in the stillness of the sheltered cove,
Which noiseless water-fowl alone molest,
At times a reverence will pervade the breast
Which will not always come, a bidden guest.

Oft as the parting smiles of day and night
Flush earth and ocean with a roseate hue,
And the quick changes of the magic light
Prolong the glory of their warm adieu,
Each pilgrim on the hills, and every crew
On the lulled waters, frame their vows anew.

Then by the waves that lip Liguria's land,
In Genoa's gulf, thou, wanderer! must have heard
What, more than hymns from Pergolesi's hand,
The living soul of adoration stirred,

And, like the note of spring's first welcomed bird,
Some thoughts awoke — for which there is no word, —

The shipman's chant! as noting travelers tell,
In either language — old and new — the same;
But more they might have truly said, and well,
For 't is a speech the universe may claim —
Men of all times, all climes, and every name —
Devotion's tongue! which from the Godhead came.

HYMN

Tost rudderless around the deep,
By Apennine and Alpine blast,
Which o'er the surge in fury sweep,
And make a bulrush of our mast,
We murmur in our half-hour's sleep,
To thee, Madonna! till the storm be past:
In mare irato, in subita procella,
Invoco te nostra benigna stella.

Whether for weeks our bark hath striven
With death in wild Sardinia's waves,
Or downward far as Tunis driven,
Threat us with life — the life of slaves,

We know whose hand its help has given,
And locked the lightning in its thunder caves.
In mare irato, in subita procella,
Invoco te nostra benigna stella.

O Virgin! when the landsman's hymn,
At vesper time, on bended knee,
In sunlit aisle, or chapel dim,
Or cloister cell, is paid to thee,
Hear us! that ocean's pavement skim,
And join our anthem to the raging sea:
In mare irato, in subita procella,
Invoco te nostra benigna stella.

And when the tempest's wrath is o'er,
And tired Libeccio sinks to rest,
And starlight falls upon the shore
Where love sits watching, uncaressed,
Though hushed the tumult and the roar,
Again the prayer we 'll chant which Thou hast blest:
In mare irato, in subita procella,
Invoco te nostra benigna stella.

THE TEMPLE OF CONCORD AT GIRGENTI

Not far from Ætna the Sicilian sun
Shines on a broken fane whose work is done:
The columns linger, but the hymn is ended;
The smoke of sacrifice, that once ascended,
Staining the sapphire with an earthlier blue,
Is vanished with the crowd, from morning's view:
Music and garlands greet no more the day;
Their gods are gone, and ours alone hath sway.

Such is Time's way with temples: look at thine!
Those changing hairs, the daily-deepening line!
Mark the slow signs; then in these things of stone
Read Agrigentum's history — and thine own.

CAMPANILE DI PISA

Snow was glistening on the mountains, but the
air was that of June,
Leaves were falling, but the runnels playing still
their summer tune,
And the dial's lazy shadow hovered nigh the brink
of noon.
On the benches in the market rows of languid
idlers lay,
When to Pisa's nodding belfry, with a friend, I
took my way.

From the top we looked around us, and as far as
eye might strain,
Saw no sign of life or motion in the town or on
the plain;
Hardly seemed the river moving through the wil-
lows to the main;
Nor was any noise disturbing Pisa from her
drowsy hour,
Save the doves that fluttered 'neath us, in and out,
and round the tower.

Not a shout from gladsome children, nor the clatter of a wheel,
Nor the spinner of the suburb winding his discordant reel,
Nor the stroke upon the pavement of a hoof or of a heel:
Even the slumberers in the churchyard of the Campo Santo seemed
Scarce more quiet than the living world that underneath us dreamed.

Dozing at the city's portal, heedless guard the sentry kept;
More than oriental dullness o'er the sunny farms had crept;
Near the walls the ducal herdsmen by the dusty roadside slept;
While the camels, resting round him, half alarmed the sullen ox,
Seeing those Arabian monsters pasturing with Etruria's flocks.

Then it was, like one who wandered, lately, singing by the Rhine
Strains perchance to maiden's hearing sweeter than this verse of mine,
That we bade Imagination lift us on her wing divine;

And the days of Pisa's greatness rose from the
sepulchral past,
When a thousand conquering galleys bore her
standard at the mast.

Memory for a moment crowned her sovereign mis-
tress of the seas,
When she braved, upon the billows, Venice and
the Genoese,
Daring to deride the Pontiff, though he shook his
angry keys;
When her admirals triumphant, riding o'er the
Soldan's waves,
Brought from Calvary's holy mountain fitting soil
for knightly graves.

When the Saracen surrendered, one by one, his
pirate isles,
And Ionia's marble trophies decked Lungarno's
Gothic piles,
Where the festal music floated in the light of
ladies' smiles;
Soldiers in the busy court-yard, nobles in the halls
above —
Oh! those days of arms are over — arms and
courtesy and love!

Now, as on Achilles' buckler, next a peaceful scene
succeeds;
Pious crowds in the cathedral duly tell their blessed
beads;
Students walk the learned cloister, — Ariosto wakes
the reeds, —
Science dawns, and Galileo opens to the Italian
youth,
As he were a new Columbus, new-discovered
realms of truth.

Hark! what murmurs from the million in the
bustling market rise!
All the lanes are loud with voices, all the windows
dark with eyes;
Black with men the marble bridges, heaped the
shores with merchandise;
Turks and Greeks and Libyan merchants in the
square their councils hold,
And the Christian altars glitter, gorgeous with
Byzantine gold!

Look! anon the masqueraders don their holiday
attire;
Every palace is illumined, all the town seems
built of fire;

Rainbow-colored lanterns dangle from the top of every spire:
Pisa's patron saint hath hallowed to himself the joyful day;
Never on the thronged Rialto showed the Carnival more gay.

Suddenly the bell beneath us broke the vision with its chime.
"Signors," quoth our gray attendant, "it is almost vesper time;"
Vulgar life resumed its empire, down we dropt from the sublime.
Here and there a friar passed us, as we paced the silent streets,
And a cardinal's rumbling carriage roused the sleepers from the seats.

SORRENTO

Midway betwixt the present and the past —
  Naples and Pæstum — look! Sorrento lies:
Ulysses built it, and the Sirens cast
  Their spell upon the shore, the sea, the skies.

If thou hast dreamed, in any dream of thine,
  How Paradise appears, or those Elysian
Immortal meadows which the gods assign
  Unto the pure of heart, — behold thy vision!

These waters, they are blue beyond belief,
  And England's emerald meads are matched by
    these;
The sun — 't is Italy's; here winter's brief
  And gentle visit hardly chills the breeze.

Here Tasso dwelt, and here inhaled with spring
  The breath of passion and the soul of song.
Here young Boccaccio plumed his early wing,
  Thenceforth to soar above the vulgar throng.

All charms of contrast, every nameless grace
That lives in outline, harmony, or hue,
So heighten all the romance of the place,
That the rapt artist maddens at the view,

And then despairs, and throws his pencil by,
And sits all day and looks upon the shore
And the calm ocean with a languid eye,
As though to labor were a law no more.

Voluptuous coast! no wonder that the proud
Imperial Roman found in yonder isle
Some sunshine still to gild Fate's gathering cloud
And lull the storm of conscience for a while.

What new Tiberius, tired of lust and life,
May rest him here to give the world a truce, —
A little truce from perjury and strife,
Justice adulterate and power's misuse?

Might the gross Bourbon — he that sleeps in spite
Of red Vesuvius ever in his eye,
Yet, if he wake, should tremble at its light,
As 't were Heaven's vengeance, promised from on high —

Might he, or any of Oppression's band,
Sit here and learn the lesson of the scene,
Peace might return to many a bleeding land,
And men grow just again, and life serene.

HUDSON RIVER

Rivers that roll most musical in song
Are often lovely to the mind alone;
The wanderer muses, as he moves along
Their vacant banks, on glories not their own.

When, to give substance to his boyhood's dreams,
He leaves his land, far countries to survey,
Oft must he think, in greeting foreign streams,
"Their names alone are beautiful, not they."

If chance he mark the dwindled Arno pour
A tide more meagre than his native Charles;
Or view the Rhone when summer's heat is o'er,
Subdued and stagnant in the fen of Arles;

Or when he sees the slimy Tiber fling
His sullen tribute at the feet of Rome,
Oft to his thought must partial memory bring
More noble waves, without renown, at home;

Now let him climb the Catskill, to behold
The lordly Hudson marching to the main,

And say what bard, in any land of old,
Had such a river to inspire his strain.

Along the Rhine, gray battlements and towers
Declare what robbers once the realm possessed;
But here Heaven's handiwork surpasseth ours,
And man has hardly more than built his nest.

No storied castle overawes these heights,
Nor antique arches check the current's play,
No mouldering architrave the mind invites
To dream of deities long passed away.

But cliffs, unaltered from their primal form
Since the subsiding of the deluge, rise
Above the lightnings of the midway storm,
While far below the skiff securely plies.

And these deep woods forever have remained
Touched by no axe, by no proud owner nursed;
As now they look, they looked when Pharaoh reigned,
Lineal descendants of creation's first.

Thou Scottish Tweed, a sacred streamlet now!
Since thy last minstrel laid him down to die,

Where through the casement of his chamber thou
Didst mix thy moan with his departing sigh,

A single stretch of Hudson's ampler hills
Might furnish forests for the whole of thine,
Hide in thick shade all Humber's feeding rills,
And darken all the fountains of the Tyne.

Imperial Thames! — could all his riches buy,
To gild the strand which London loads with gold,
Sunshine so bright, such purity of sky,
As bless thy sultry season and thy cold?

No tales, we know, are chronicled of thee
In ancient scrolls; no deeds of doubtful claim
Have hung a history on every tree,
And given each rock its fable and a fame.

But neither here hath any conqueror trod,
Nor grim invader from barbarian climes;
No horrors feigned of giant or of god
Pollute thy stillness with recorded crimes.

Here never yet have happy fields laid waste,
The ravished harvest and the blasted fruit,
The cottage ruined and the shrine defaced,
Tracked the foul passage of the feudal brute.

"Yet, O Antiquity!" the stranger sighs,
"Scenes wanting thee soon pall upon the view;
The soul's indifference dulls the sated eyes,
Where all is fair indeed — but all is new."

False thought! is age to crumbling walls confined?
To Grecian fragments and Egyptian bones?
Hath Time no monuments to raise the mind,
More than old fortresses and sculptured stones?

Call not this new which is the only land
That wears unchanged the same primeval face
Which, when just dawning from its Maker's hand,
Gladdened the first great grandsire of our race.

Nor did Euphrates with an earlier birth
Glide past green Eden towards the unknown south,
Than Hudson broke upon the infant earth,
And kissed the ocean with his nameless mouth.

Twin-born with Jordan, Ganges, and the Nile!
Thebes and the Pyramids to thee are young;
Oh! had thy waters burst from Britain's isle,
Till now, perchance, they had not flowed unsung.

THE SHADOW OF THE OBELISK

Combien d'hommes ont regardé cette ombre en Egypte et à Rome ? — CHATEAUBRIAND.

HOMEWARD turning from the music which had
'wildered so my brain,
That my way I scarce remembered to the Quirinal
again, —
Not unwilling to forget it underneath a moon so fair,
In a solitude so sacred, and so summer-like an air, —
By the shore I came, of Tiber, little conscious where
I stood,
Till I marked the yellow trembling of the light
upon the flood.

Tethered near, some broken barges hid the wave's
august repose ;
Petty sheds of humble dealers nigh the Campus
Martius rose ;
Hardly could the dingy Thamis, when his tide is
ebbing low,
Life's dull scene in colder colors to the homesick
exile show.

Winding from the vulgar prospect, through a labyrinth of lanes,
Forth I stood upon the Corso, where its greatness Rome retains.

Yet it was not ancient glory, though the midnight radiance fell
Soft on many a princely mansion, many a dome's majestic swell;
Though, from some hushed corner gushing, oft a modern fountain gleamed,
Where the marble and the waters in their freshness equal seemed:
What though open courts unfolded columns of Corinthian mould?
Beautiful it was, — but altered! naught bespake the Rome of old.

So, regardless of the grandeur, passed I towards the Northern Gate;
All around were shining gardens, — churches glittering, yet sedate,
Heavenly bright the broad enclosure! but the o'erwhelming silence brought
Stillness to mine own heart's beating, with a moment's turn of thought,

And it startled me to notice I was walking unaware
O'er the Obelisk's tall shadow on the pavement of the square.

Ghost-like seemed it to address me, and conveyed me for a while
Backward, through a thousand ages, to the borders of the Nile,
Where the centuries watched its creeping from the morn when it begun,
O'er the stones perchance of Memphis, or the City of the Sun.
Kingly turrets looked upon it, pyramids and sculptured fanes;
Now the sand is king o'er Pharaoh, but the shadow still remains.

Out of Egypt came the trophy, from old empire to the new;
Here the eternal apparition met the millions' daily view.
Virgil's foot has touched it often; it hath kissed Octavia's face;
Royal chariots have rolled o'er it, in the frenzy of the race,

When the strong, the swift, the valiant, mid the
thronged arena strove,
In the days of good Augustus, and the dynasty of
Jove.

Herds are feeding in the Forum, as in old
Evander's time;
Tumbled from the steep Tarpeian all the towers
that sprang sublime.
Strange! that what seemed most inconstant should
the most abiding prove;
Strange! that what is hourly moving no mutation
can remove;
Ruined lies the cirque! the chariots long ago
have ceased to roll;
Even the Obelisk is broken, — but the shadow still
is whole.

What is fame! if mightiest empire leave so little
mark behind,
How much less must heroes hope for, in the wreck
of humankind!
Less than even this darksome picture, which I
tread beneath my feet,
Copied by a lifeless moonbeam on the pebbles of
the street:

Read the name upon the base there, — most of all
Rome's names renowned,
Cæsar! — what left he behind him, save the
shadow of a sound?

LA PINETA DISTRUTTA

"La divina foresta spessa e viva

. . . . . .

Per cui le fronde, tremolando pronte,
Tutte quante piegavano . . .
Non però dal lor esser dritto sparte
Tanto, che gli augelletti per le cime
Lasciasser d' operare ogni lor arte:
Ma con piena letizia l' ôre prime,
Cantando, ricevièno intra le foglie,
Che tenevan bordone alle sue rime;
Tal, qual di ramo in ramo si raccoglie
Per la pineta in sul lito di Chiassi
Quand' Eolo Scirrocco fuor discioglie."

Purgatorio, Canto xxviii.

. . . . . .

FAREWELL, Ravenna's forest! and farewell
For aye through coming centuries to the sound,
Over blue Adria, of the lyric pines,
And Chiassi's bird-song keeping burden sweet
To their low moan as once to Dante's lines,
Which when my step first felt Italian ground
I strove to follow, carried by the spell
Of that sad Florentine whose very street

(At morn and midnight) where he used to dwell
My father bade me pace with reverent feet.
Some rapid spirit, misapprehending this,
Will say, "Perchance our imbecile prefers
Pine woods to railways." What! the living trees
To the dead sleepers of the vulgar track?
Yes; if men find in business all their bliss,
And if our Harvard Academe so errs
In counting Cicero something more than cheese
And Virgil's "*Gallus*" better than the clack
Of Brockton boot-shops and the lasts of Lynn,
Then let men cease a little from their brag
Of "*recti cultus roborant.*" Go spin
The sooner to destruction with spread flag, —
Fools' commonwealth! — and trot thyself to death
With speed, and speed, but never once God-speed!
Because our age, like Judas, bears the bag,
And every scholar needs must bate his breath
If any black-thumbed boor waxed rich precede.
Plutus hath made God's image a machine
For minting dollars; and the nobler art,
Dante's, Boccaccio's, Dryden's, Byron's, mine,
Seems for its value in the public mart
Less than the song was of Ravenna's pine.

LETTER FROM AMERICA TO A FRIEND IN TUSCANY

On the rough Bracco's top, at break of day,
High o'er that gulf which bounds the Genoese,
Since thou and I pursued our mountain way,
Twenty Decembers have disrobed the trees.

Charmed by the glowing earth and golden sky,
In Arno's vale you made yourself a nest;
There perched in peace and bookish ease, while I,
In love with Freedom, sought her in the West.

And here, amid remembrances that throng
Thicker than blossoms in the new-born June,
Thine chiefly claims the token of a song
That still, at least, my heart remains in tune.

But who can sing amid this roar of streets,
This crash of engines and discordant mills,
Where even in Solitude's most lone retreats
Some factory drowns the music of the rills?

True, Nature here hath donned her gala robe,
Rich in all charms, — bland, savage, and sublime, —
Within one realm enfolding half the globe,
Flowers of all soils, and fruits of every clime.

But yet no bard, with consecrating touch,
Hath made the scene a nobler mood inspire;
The sullen Puritan, the sensual Dutch,
Proved but a barren fosterage for the lyre.

Here by the ploughman, as with daily tread
He tracks the furrows of his virgin ground,
Dark locks of hair, and thigh-bones of the dead,
Spear-heads, and skulls, and arrow-heads are found.

On such memorials unconcerned we gaze;
No trace returning of the glow divine
Wherewith, dear Walter! in our Eton days
We eyed a fragment from the Palatine.

Cellini's workmanship could nothing add,
Nor the Pope's blessing, nor a case of gold,
To the strange value every pebble had
O'er which perhaps the Tiber's wave had rolled.

A like enchantment all thy land pervades,
Mellows the sunshine, softens autumn's breeze,
O'erhangs the mouldering town, and chestnut shades,
And glows and sparkles in her storied seas.

No such a spell the charmed adventurer guides
Who seeks those ruins hid in Yucatan,
Where through the tropic forest, silent glides,
By crumbled fane and idol, slow Copàn.

There, as the weedy pyramid he climbs,
Or views, mid groves that rankly wave above,
The work of nameless hands in unknown times,
Much wakes his wonder — nothing stirs his love.

Art's rude beginnings, wheresoever found,
The same dull chord of feeling faintly strike;
The Druid's pillar, and the Indian mound,
And Uxmal's monuments, are mute alike.

And here, although the gorgeous year hath brought
Crimson October's beautiful decay,
Seldom this loveliness inspires a thought
Beyond the marvels of the fleeting day.

For here the Present overpowers the Past ;
No recollections to these woods belong,
O'er which no minstrelsy its veil hath cast,
To rouse our worship, or supply my song.

But these will come ; the necromancer Age
Shall round the wilderness his glory throw ;
Hudson shall murmur through the poet's page,
And in his numbers more superbly flow.

Enough ! — 't is more than midnight by the clock ;
Manhattan dreams of dollars, all abed :
With you, dear Walter, 't is the crow of cock,
And o'er Fièsole the skies are red.

Good-night ! yet stay — both longitudes to suit,
Your own returning, and my absent light,
Thus let me bid our mutual salute ;
To you *buon-giorno* — for myself good-night !

ROSLIN CHAPEL

Thy beauty, Roslin, woke a loftier thought —
Those friars are gone, but not the truths they taught;
The mind that planned thee, and the monks that reared,
Censers, bells, candles — all have disappeared:
But the same spirit hovers round thy walls
That hallows Westminster, pervades St. Paul's,
Or makes the pile that sanctifies the Ouse
A place of pilgrimage for my small muse.

When Scotland's poet led his poet-guest
To thee from Hawthornden's romantic nest,
Thou wast a wreck, and Johnson's learned eye
Read in thy stones but barbarism gone by.
Now from a thousand leagues beyond the sea
Men come to wonder at and study thee,
And maids of English tongue but foreign birth
Kneel on thy flags and kiss thy sacred earth.

And when thy second ruin shall come round
And not one stone be on another found,

The faith which hung those arches and restored,
Shall still raise temples to the living Lord.
The creed of immortality is thine,
Whose life depends not on one mouldering shrine.
Your gods, ye Greeks, died long before your fanes:
Churches may crumble, but Christ's word remains.

BY THE SUDBURY

Hardly who bends o'er Wayland bridge
  Can tell which side the current flows;
In vain you mark the swaying sedge —
  This way and that each eddy goes.

I drop a leaflet on the wave —
  A crimson page from autumn's book —
Did ever thing so misbehave?
  For less it moves as more I look!

They say the Sudbury seeks the sea,
  But ocean to the eastward lies;
This dallying streamlet seems to be
  Bound for the spring whence it had rise,

And lingers as it loved the meads
  And mossy rocks where cattle stray
More than those dank, salt-smelling weeds
  And breakers of the distant bay;

The lilied banks, the frequent gifts
  Of apple blossoms drifting down,

More than yon cold and gravelly clifts,
Where vessels wreck and seamen drown ;

And shuns to leave the sunny slope
Where maples, nodding o'er the brook,
Their branches to the oriole ope
And yield the summer thrush a nook.

Is it not so with us? We dread
In the great sea of love to lose
Our individual being, dead
To present images, and choose

A life uncertain, full of pain,
Rather than on that unknown, dark,
Awful, unfathomable main
Put forth in such a fragile bark,

Dismantled of all tender ties
That make us feel content, secure,
And through life's aches and agonies
Bestow the courage to endure.

But One is watching o'er the deep,
As on the rivulet. We know
He giveth his beloved sleep —
A slumber that is end of woe.

INSCRIPTION FOR A DRINKING FOUNTAIN AT WAYLAND

You that from cups of gay champagne
Or coffee come, to take a turn
Across our pleasant Sudbury plain
To where the Wayside fagots burn,

Here let your lordly palfreys drink,
Here give thy panting steed a rest,
That on your pillow ye may think,
"I have remembered Heaven's behest:

"'Do unto others what ye would
Another one should unto you,'"
And let thy charity include
Thy neighbor and his horses, too.

MARTIAL ODE

WRITTEN FOR THE ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY

— "manus hæc inimica tyrannis,
Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."
ALGERNON SIDNEY.

ANCIENT of days! Thy prophets old
Declared Thee also Lord of war;
And sacred chroniclers have told
Of kings whom Thou didst battle for.

Ancient and honorable men
Have always kept the sword in sight,
Against a day when purchased pen
Or venal voices poison right.

If kings oppress or disobey
Their people's will, the axe must fall;
Or should a people madly stray
From judgment in their council-hall,

Till wisdom, wavering, yields at length,
And love is lost on either side,
Thy dread arbitrament, O Strength!
Every strong nation must abide.

When Heaven's artillery shakes the skies
Death and wild ruin follow fast,
That purer elements may rise
Soon as the storm is overpast;

When armies by Potomac's flood
Menaced the fabric of the free,
Our eagle's young ones sucked up blood,
And where the slain are there was She.

Now London sends her loyal sons
To grace our gathering: clarion! fife!
Sound England welcome! drums and guns!
Ring notes of gladness — not of strife.

That placid quiet all men seek,
Long may it crown a land restored!
But Massachusetts! be not weak,
If wronged, to seek it with a sword.

GUY FAWKES DAY

AT THE OLD HOUSE IN SUDBURY

One fifth of November, when meadows were brown,
And the crimson woods withered round Sudbury town,
Four lads from that city which Holmes calls the best,
At an old tavern met for a whole day of rest.

There was Henry and Austin and William and John,
And the glasses went round as the oak-wood went on,
And the spirit was kindly, the water was hot.
Why, then, should Guy Fawkes and his day be forgot?

He was known in this tavern of old, I *expect*,
Though his name, like the turnpike, has come to neglect;

And I *guess* there was loyalty under this roof —
See! Her Majesty's picture remains for a proof.

But distinction is lost, — the Queen 's nobody now,
And a sovereign is not worth a sixpence to Howe,
Though his fathers before him, the constant old carles,
By the name of their monarch did christen the Charles.

There be names on the window-panes written with rings,
When the gentles wore diamonds and all was the king's;
When Joel and Hiram, as still they should do,
Served the punch, my dear Henry, to persons like you.

But the scutcheon is faded that hangs on the wall,
And the hearth looks forlorn in the desolate hall;
And the floor that has bent with the minuet's tread,
It is like a church pavement, — the dancers are dead.

Yet we summoned them back, and recalled ancient times,
And we roused the old Papist, repeating his rhymes,

And, to help on the humor, each man, with his drink,
Gave the best match for Guido of whom he could think.

Well, we thought of all scandalous names that had been,
Cain, Catiline, Borgia, — the bywords of sin, —
Saint Dominic Guzman, Maràt, Machiavèl, —
Though the splendor of that one we recognized well.

Then Austin propounded — a health to old Nol!
And those Roundheaded rogues whom our speakers extol;
And one mentioned Arnold, and one Aaron Burr,
And that Empress was named in the country of fur.

But we tired of such folk, so, to sweeten our toast
Gave that noblest of bards Massachusetts can boast!
Famous now is this house, in whose halls he hath been,
For his muse hath made sacred old Sudbury Inn!

THE OLD HOUSE IN SUDBURY TWENTY YEARS AFTERWARDS

"Our revels now are ended." — *Tempest.*

THUNDER-CLOUDS may roll above him,
And the bolt may rend his oak:
Lyman lieth where no longer
He shall dread the lightning stroke.

Never to his father's hostel
Comes a kinsman or a guest;
Midnight calls for no more candles:
House and landlord both have rest.

Adam's love and Adam's trouble
Are a scarce-remembered tale;
No more wine-cups brightly bubble;
No more healths, nor cakes, nor ale.

On the broken hearth a dotard
Sits, and fancies foolish things;

And the poet weaves romances,
Which the maiden fondly sings,

All about the ancient hostel
With its legends and its oaks,
And the quaint old-bachelor brothers,
And their minstrelsy and jokes.

No man knows them any longer:
All are gone, and I remain
Reading, as it were, mine epitaph
On the rainbow-colored pane.

Blessings on them, dear initials!
Henry W., Daniel T.,
E. and L.: — I 'll not interpret;
Let men wonder who they be.

Some are in their graves, and many
Buried in their books and cares;
In the tropics, in Archangel:
Our thoughts are no longer theirs.

God have mercy! all are sinful;
Christ, conform our lives to thine!
Keep us from all strife, ill-speaking,
Envy, and the curse of wine.

Fetch my steed! I cannot linger.
Buckley, quick! I must away.
Good old groom, take thou this nothing;
Millions could not make me stay.

MY SUDBURY MISTLETOE

LONDON, CHRISTMAS DAY, MDCCCLXXI

THIS hallowed stem the Druids once adored,
And now I wreathe it round my bleeding Lord;
So might my spirit around his image twine,
And find support, as in its oak a vine!

"I am the Vine," He said; Lord, then let me
Be just a tendril clinging to the tree
Where the Jews nailed Thee bodily, to grow
Fruit for all fainting souls that grope below.

May this green hope that in my heart is born
Blossom before another Christmas morn!
Then my weird mistletoe I 'll cast away,
And hang up lilies to record the day.

THE WILLEY HOUSE

A BALLAD OF THE WHITE HILLS

I

Come, children, put your baskets down,
And let the blushing berries be;
Sit here and wreathe a laurel crown,
And if I win it, give it me.

'T is afternoon — it is July —
The mountain shadows grow and grow;
Your time of rest, and mine is nigh —
The moon was rising long ago.

While yet on old Chocorua's top
The lingering sunlight says farewell,
Your purple-fingered labor stop,
And hear a tale I have to tell.

II

You see that cottage in the glen,
Yon desolate, forsaken shed,

Whose mouldering threshold, now and then,
Only a few stray travelers tread.

No smoke is curling from its roof,
At eve no cattle gather round,
No neighbor now, with dint of hoof,
Prints his glad visit on the ground.

A happy home it was of yore:
At morn the flocks went nibbling by,
And Farmer Willey, at his door,
Oft made their reckoning with his eye.

Where yon rank alder-trees have sprung,
And birches cluster, thick and tall,
Once the stout apple overhung,
With his red gifts, the orchard wall.

Right fond and pleasant in their ways
The gentle Willey people were;
I knew them in those peaceful days,
And Mary — every one knew her.

III

Two summers now had seared the hills,
Two years of little rain or dew;
High up the courses of the rills
The wild-rose and the raspberry grew:

The mountain sides were cracked and dry,
And frequent fissures on the plain,
Like mouths, gaped open to the sky,
As though the parched earth prayed for rain.

One sultry August afternoon,
Old Willey, looking toward the west,
Said, "We shall hear the thunder soon:
Oh! if it bring us rain, 't is blest."

And even with his word, a smell
Of sprinkled fields passed through the air,
And from a single cloud there fell
A few large drops — the rain was there.

Ere set of sun a thunder-stroke
Gave signal to the floods to rise;
Then the great seal of heaven was broke,
Then burst the gates that barred the skies!

While from the west the clouds rolled on,
And from the nor'west gathered fast,
"We 'll have enough of rain anon,"
Said Willey, "if this deluge last."

For all these cliffs that stand sublime
Around, like solemn priests appeared,

Gray Druids of the olden time,
Each with his white and streaming beard,

Till in one sheet of seething foam
The mingled torrents joined their might;
But in the Willeys' quiet home
Was naught but silence and "Good-night!"

For soon they went to their repose,
And in their beds, all safe and warm,
Saw not how fast the waters rose,
Heard not the growing of the storm.

But just before the stroke of ten,
Old Willey looked into the night,
And called upon his two hired men,
And woke his wife, who struck a light,

Though her hand trembled, as she heard
The horses whinnying in the stall,
And — "Children!" was the only word
That woman from her lips let fall.

"Mother!" the frightened infants cried,
"What is it? has a whirlwind come?"
Wildly the weeping mother eyed
Each little darling, but was dumb.

A sound! as though a mighty gale
Some forest from its hold had riven,
Mixed with a rattling noise like hail!
God! art Thou raining rocks from heaven?

A flash! O Christ! the lightning showed
The mountain moving from his seat!
Out! out into the slippery road!
Into the wet with naked feet!

No time for dress, — for life! for life!
No time for any word but this.
The father grasped his boys, his wife
Snatched her young babe, — but not to kiss.

And Mary with the younger girl,
Barefoot and shivering in their smocks,
Sped forth amid that angry whirl
Of rushing waves and whelming rocks.

For down the mountain's crumbling side,
Full half the mountain from on high
Came sinking, like the snows that slide
From the great Alps about July.

And with it went the lordly ash,
And with it went the kingly pine;

Cedar and oak, amid the crash,
Dropped down like clippings of the vine.

Two rivers rushed, — the one that broke
His wonted bounds and drowned the land,
And one that streamed with dust and smoke,
A flood of earth, of stones and sand.

Then for a time the vale was dry,
The soil had swallowed up the wave;
Till one star, looking from the sky,
A signal to the tempest gave:

The clouds withdrew, the storm was o'er,
Bright Aldebàran burned again;
The buried river rose once more,
And foamed along his gravelly glen.

IV

At noon the men of Conway felt
Some dreadful thing had chanced that night,
And those by Breton woods who dwelt
Observed the mountain's altered height.

Old Crawford and the Fabyan lad
Came down from Ammonoosuc then,
And passed the Notch, — ah! strange and sad
It was to see the ravaged glen.

But having toiled for miles, in doubt,
With many a risk of limb and neck,
They saw, and hailed with joyful shout
The Willey House amid the wreck.

That avalanche of stones and sand,
Remembering mercy in its wrath,
Had parted, and on either hand
Pursued the ruin of its path.

And there upon its pleasant slope,
The cottage, like a sunny isle
That wakes the shipwrecked seaman's hope,
Amid that horror seemed to smile.

And still upon the lawn before,
The peaceful sheep were nibbling nigh;
But Farmer Willey at his door
Stood not to count them with his eye.

And in the dwelling — O despair!
The silent room! the vacant bed!
The children's little shoes were there —
But whither were the children fled?

That day a woman's head, all gashed,
Its long hair streaming in the flow,

Went o'er the dam, and then was dashed
Among the whirlpools down below.

And farther down, by Saco side,
They found the mangled forms of four,
Held in an eddy of the tide;
But Mary, she was seen no more.

Yet never to this mournful vale
Shall any maid, in Summer time,
Come without thinking of the tale
I now have told you in my rhyme.

And when the Willey House is gone,
And its last rafter is decayed,
Its history may yet live on
In this your ballad that I made.

THE ROSE AND THE ORIOLE

A FABLE WITHOUT A MORAL

Rose of Damascus! rose of all!
Queen of the roses of the world!
The only flower that ere his fall
Adam thought fit to pluck for Eve,
As once she lay in slumber curled,
And he, though half afraid to speak,
Said, "Lovely being, by your leave,
Your husband gives you this — and this:"
Then laid a rose upon her cheek,
A damask rose, and kiss.

The rose before was not so red:
But Eve awoke, and such a blush,
With her smile mingling, overspread
Her face that instantly the flower
Felt through its veins new coloring rush,
Till every petal showed the stain!
And so in the most radiant hour
Of midsummer's resplendent morn,

The queen of all the rosy train,
The damask rose, was born!

Soon as this woman, flower in hand,
Led Adam where the strawberries grew,
An oriole from a palm that fanned
These earliest lovers, on the rose
Lighted; and straight his natural hue
Of gold, that red to orange turned!
Then the sly bird his moment chose,
Snatched the rose from her hand, and fled
Far as an amethyst cloud that burned
In the bright blue o'erhead.

Now when thou watchest in the west
The splendors of the dying day,
Think of the damask rose that prest
Her cheek whom we our Mother call,
As dreaming in her bower she lay.
Remember, too, the oriole's theft, —
First theft that was, ere Adam's fall, —
And in the crimson clouds behold,
Unless thy heart all faith have left,
His orange and his gold.

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

This day was sacred, once, to Pan,
And kept with song and wine;
But when our better creed began
'T was held no more divine,
Until there came a holy man,
One Bishop Valentine.

He, finding, as all good men will,
Much in the ancient way
That was not altogether ill,
Restored the genial day,
And we the pagan fashion still
With pious hearts obey.

Without this custom, all would go
Amiss in Love's affairs;
All passion would be poor dumb show,
Pent sighs, and secret prayers;
And bashful maids would never know
What timid swain was theirs.

Ah! many things with mickle pains
Without reward are done;
A thousand poets rack their brains
For her who loves but one;
Yea, many weary with their strains
The nymph that cares for none.

Yet, should no faithful heart be faint
To give affection's sign;
So, dearest, let mine own acquaint
With its emotions — thine;
And blessings on that fine old saint,
Good Bishop Valentine!

HEALTH AND WEALTH AND LOVE AND LEISURE, AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR, TO MY SWEET LADYE

In the fair blank that now, like some new bay
In life's vague ocean, opens with to-day,
Couldst thou but write, dear lady, at thy will,
All thou wouldst choose of good, or shun of ill,
As on this paper thou mayst fill the space
With thoughts and wishes gentle as thy face,
Thou couldst not crowd the days that are to be
With happier fortune than I hope for thee.

For, if the saint that keeps the book above
Which holds the record of thy life and love,
Where at one view thy childhood and thine age,
Thy past and future, gleam upon the page,
Should trust his volume to my hand, and say,
Write for Augusta all you ask or pray,
All that twelve moons may bring of peace and bliss,
Then would I register some fate like this:

Health, first of all, that every morn may find
The same bright casket for the same clear mind,

And every night bring such repose, that care
May find no triumph in one altered hair.

Affection then, the same thou still hast known,
Such as would shudder at a careless tone,
And count it selfishness to have a grief
That in thy sharing did not seek relief.

Next golden leisure, to enjoy the sun,
With one to worship, and but only one;
With him to tread the solitude, and then
No less securely try the ways of men;
To move in crowds, yet keep the calm within,
Still amid noise, and spotless amid sin.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE PEACOCK

The peacock sits perched on the roof all night,
And wakes up the farmhouse before 't is light;
But his matins they suit not the delicate ear
Of the drowsy damsels, that half in fear
And half in disgust his discord hear.

.

If the soul's migration from frame to frame
Be truth, tell me now whence the peacock's came?
Say if it had birth at the musical close
Of a dying hyena, — or if it arose
From a Puritan scold that sang psalms through
her nose?

Well: a jackass there was — but you need not look
For this fable of mine in old Æsop's book —
That one complaint all his life had whined,
How Nature had been either blind or unkind
To give him an aspect so unrefined.

"'T is cruel," he groaned, "that I cannot escape
From the vile prison-house of this horrible shape:
So gentle a temper as mine to shut in

This figure uncouth and so shaggy a skin,
And then these long ears! — it 's a shame and a sin."

Good-natured Jove his upbraidings heard,
And changed the vain quadruped into a bird,
And garnished his plumage with many a spot
Of ineffable hue, such as earth wears not, —
For he dipped him into the rainbow-pot.

So dainty he looked in his gold and green,
That the monarch presented the bird to his queen,
Who, taken with colors, — as most ladies are, —
Had him harnessed straight in her crystal car
Wherein she travels from star to star.

But soon as his thanks the poor dissonant thing
Began to bray when he strove to sing,
"Poor creature!" quoth Jove, "spite of all my pains
Your spirit shines out in your donkey strains!
Though plumed bright as Iris, the ass remains."

So you see, love, that goodness is better than grace;
For the proverb fails in the peacock's case,
Which says that fine feathers make fine birds too:
This other old adage is far more true, —
They only are handsome that handsomely do.

TO A LADY

WITH A HEAD OF POPE PIUS NINTH

My gift went freighted with a hope, —
  Slight bark upon a doubtful sea!
Yet, under convoy of the Pope,
  Successful may the venture be;
    For thus good Pius whispered me,
    "Mi fili, Benedicite!"

His blessing now I will transfer
  To thee, although I hardly know
What Latin form appropriate were.
  "Cor meum!" — shall I call thee so?
    No, let the learned language be
    But, sweetheart, Benedicite!

Your cardinals are blooming yet,
  Pride of the brook! the meadow's gem!
So, ere his sun be wholly set,
  I send, in due return for them,
    The Pope — hark, love, he says to thee,
    "My daughter, Benedicite!"

Oh, take his blessing, then, — for ne'er
Did evil come from holy touch;
A righteous man's effectual prayer,
As the Saint says, availeth much;
So, for this once, a Papist be,
Nor scorn his Benedicite!

TO A LADY

IN RETURN FOR A BOOK OF MICHEL ANGELO'S SONNETS

> "Non ha l' ottimo artista alcun concetto
> Ch' un solo marmo in se non circoscriva
> Col suo soverchio, — e solo a quello arriva,
> La man' che obbedisce all' intelletto."
>
> *Sonnetto di Michel Angelo Buonarroti.*

No master artist e'er imagines aught
That lies not hid, awaiting mortal gaze,
In the rough marble, — if but fitly wrought
By one whose hand his intellect obeys:
His magic touch the stone's white silence wakes,
And, lo! the god from his long bondage breaks:

Breaks like the blue morn from an orient vapor,
Which made the pilgrim doubtful of the day;
Or like the music from the written paper
O'er which some poet lets his fancy play;
Like new-born April from the winter's tomb,
Or any joy that springs from any gloom.

Lady! the fair material of our being
Is put before us, to be carved at will:

Oh! wisely work, with clear conception seeing
The perfect shape that shall reward thy skill:
Something there may be, cut from every life,
Something to worship — whether saint or wife.

Learn Patience first; for Patience is the part
Of all whom Time records among the great,
The only gift I know, the only art,
To strengthen up our frailties to our fate:
Through long endurance comes the martyr crown
That makes the hero blush for his renown.

And, as by many steps, from thorn to flower,
The patient petals of the rose recover
The hues and fragrance of the golden hour,
That saw last summer's nightingale her lover,
So may thy soul, if constancy be thine,
Toil on through trials till it dawn divine!

TO A HUNGARIAN LADY — HOMEWARD BOUND

O Dorothea! those Hungarian hills
That bred thy beauty seem so dear to me
That often such a passionate longing thrills
My soul to see that country, I could weep
To think how loves are sundered by the sea!
That age must evermore the fireside keep!
Ulysses could not: strength was giv'n to him
Of mind and body. Were I such as he —
As resolute of heart, as lithe of limb —
I too would start as pilgrim — oh, how soon!
To see the land whose brooks the Danube swell,
Soon as that river leaves Germania's rim,
By Buda's bridge, by boats and citadel,
To seek the Euxine under the new moon
That rules Byzantium still, though not for aye;
But since I never may behold that realm,
Nor tread in June the vineyards of Tokai,
I will not let that sorrow overwhelm
My spirit wholly, but will count it grace,
If I may never breathe Carpathian air,
To think of Hungary, looking on a face
And one slight figure that was moulded there.

ALLE SORELLE

You nymphs that blossom in the shade,
If every flower that drinks the dew
The symbol be of some fair maid,
To what shall I resemble you?

Since not a fragrance nor a bloom,
That makes the glory of your fields,
But in its freshness or perfume
Some likeness to your beauty yields.

One to a chaste magnolia's flower,
Sole bud upon the virgin tree,
I might compare; but scarce the power
To tell you why belongs to me,

Save that her sunny presence wears
The radiant aspect of the South;
Long Summer days and Southern airs
Shine in her eyes, play round her mouth.

But you, to one another vowed,
Who lead the sacred life, apart

From the vain clamor of the crowd,
From the wild tumult of the heart,

In your own groves your emblems grow,
Walled round with silence everywhere,
And lifted from the world below
To healthier soil and purer air.

For thou, of eye and soul serene,
Seem'st, lady whom I most adore!
A mountain laurel, ever green,
Sprinkling the hills with Springtime o'er;

No matter whether Summer's drought
A look of withering Winter bring,
Or if December's blast be out,
Where thou art dwelling, — it is spring.

Thy sister is that modest, pale,
And sweetest nursling of the wood,
That men call lily of the vale
Because it dwells in lowly mood:

Under the laurel shade it grows,
Nestling itself so close thereby
That, when their blossoms fall, the snows
Of both together mingled lie:

And both in beauty seem so even,
That now I worship one, and now
Find in the other half my heaven : —
Guess, O my dearest, which art thou ?

TO JOSEPHINE

WITH IVY LEAVES

This ivy that hung on the garden-wall,
In sunlight, in moonlight, in rain, in dew,
Shall glisten to-night in the festive hall,
And gather fresh beauty and grace from you.

Like a pearl-drop plucked from the deep, to gleam
On the ivory throne of a lady's wrist,
To-night shall its loveliness lovelier seem
On the head by whose tresses it shall be kissed.

LILY OF STRATH-FARRAR

My lady comes of knightly race;
Her forbears oft on many a field,
Ere arms to merchandise gave place,
With life's best drops their honor sealed.
She beareth lilies on her shield,
The flower de luce is her device;
And on the roll of her degree
Crosses are blazoned twice and thrice.

Some served their king on foreign strands;
One yeoman fell to make us free;
One, at his country's high commands,
Helped build the country that you see:
What wonder that his child to me
Seems of that life a precious part,
Or that I render her in rhyme
The constant service of my heart?

I know mine age forbids to me
More than a distant lover's doom;
To worship still and dream that she
Some day may wander to my tomb,

And haply hang a clover-bloom
  Upon my marble cross, in sign
That she remembers me with love,
  Though always cold and never mine!

OBITUARY

FINDING Francesca full of tears, I said,
"Tell me thy trouble." "Oh, my dog is dead!
Murdered by poison! — no one knows for what —
Was ever dog born capable of that?"
"Child," — I began to say, but checked my thought, —
"A better dog can easily be bought."
For no — what animal could him replace?
Those loving eyes! That fond, confiding face!
Those dear, dumb touches! Therefore I was dumb.
From word of mine could any comfort come?
A bitter sorrow 't is to lose a brute
Friend, dog or horse, for grief must then be mute, —
So many smile to see the rivers shed
Of tears for one poor, speechless creature dead.
When parents die there 's many a word to say —
Kind words, consoling — one can always pray;
When children die 't is natural to tell
Their mother, "Certainly, with them 't is well!"
But for a dog, 't was all the life he had,

Since death is end of dogs, or good or bad.
This was his world; he was contented here;
Imagined nothing better, naught more dear,
Than his young mistress; sought no brighter sphere;
Having no sin, asked not to be forgiven;
Ne'er guessed at God nor ever dreamed of heaven.
Now he has passed away, so much of love
Goes from our life, without one hope above!
When a dog dies there 's nothing to be said
But — kiss me, darling! — dear old Smiler 's dead.

IN RETURN FOR SOME PRAIRIE BIRDS

'T is a pretty fair farm, that of ours in the West;
And the poultry they raise there, it equals the best;
These hens of the prairie, I never have seen
A civilized capon more plump or as clean.

'T is a fine hunting-ground, the domain we possess,
Some thousand miles off, — sure it cannot be less;
For it took 'em three days, in the mire and the snow,
These birds to bring hither, — the rivers were low.

I have walked over England, and given a look
At all their great houses; but ne'er was a duke,
For all his French pedigree, all his fair crest,
That had such a park as our park in the West.

Gray bird of the wilderness! lucky for you
That you 'scaped the fell shaft of the wandering Sioux!
Then the savage had gorged you, half burnt and half raw,
And tossed your sweet bones a *bonne bouche* to his squaw.

But now you shall grace an Athenian board,
And sparkling libations to you shall be poured;
If Iowa send game and Ohio send wine,
And Cambridge good company, — may we not dine?

What have they at Windsor we cannot have here?
If we 've no royal names, yet we 'll have royal cheer:
This only is wanting, — that he were my guest
Whose friendship supplies me with birds from the West.

TO MADDALENA

Le chiome a l' aura sparse, e lei conserva
Indietro veggio ; e cosa bella riede
Nel cor come colei che tien la chiave.

PETRARCA, *Son. XCIII.*

MANY in shades like these find loneliness
A kind of terror : I am ne'er alone,
With Nature smiling in her summer dress,
And with one lady of such gentle tone
As Maddalena's, whose companionship,
Casual or constant, is enough to make
The world seem richer for what things I skip
Who skip so much of life for study's sake.

CANDLEMAS NIGHT

While still the west was glowing, yesternight,
From a small dwelling in a common street,
Amid all common things of sound and sight,
A mighty spirit Olympus-ward did fleet.
In that celestial commonwealth of souls
Who have deserved Olympus, what a crowd
Will come about him! how the list unrolls
Of names like his! with voice no longer loud,
But low and tender, trembling to the tone
Of his melodious greeting, "O my true!
O Charles! dear Edmund! constant Garrison!
Sweet singer by the Charles! when friends were few."

Haply some elder champions, from afar,
Noting such press, will tow'rds the front advance:
The man whose soul they say "was like a star,"
And some of German-land, and One from France;
And, of the Sydneys, Algernon, whose word
Writ on our shield bears freedom's fruit for aye;

And those Greek youths that Athens' rights restored
Shall hold his hand in theirs, and Wendell say,
"Beloved Harmodius! thou didst never die;
Aristogeiton! here is for thy sword
A myrtle of Mount Vernon, plucked this day."

Sing, heavy heart, for heaviness —
Till Music's burden make thine less.
Life is not all that children think,
But graybeards at its failures wink
And find in harmony relief
From touches of remembered grief;
For Age well knows he nothing knows,
And life, in drawing to its close,
Seems in a deeper mystery mailed,
And all the clouds that erst prevailed
From time to time with gleams of light
Gather to deeper folds of night,
Impenetrable as to us
Th' envolumed hippopotamus.
Then, heavy heart, for heaviness
Sing on and make thy misery less;
In God's name use whatever art
May cure that heaviness of heart,
And thank the Giver who relents
Thus much of his austere intents

And lends the setting of our sun
Rose-colored clouds to gild the dun
That looms behind the horizon's line,
Where unknown seas and skies combine.

ON A PHOTOGRAPH RECEIVED FROM A FRIEND IN ROME

Perchè la faccia mia sì t' innamora ?
DANTE.

PEARL of Savoy! so precious to the heart
Of all Italians, and of all who love
That land of Italy, if some apart
Who dwell from Italy's air and Italy's tongue
Fail of remembrance, — when they look above
The private altar where they daily do
Their matins and their vespertine devotions,
Beside the cross they see thy picture too,
Where Victor's name is near Immanuel's hung;
And though from Tiber sundered by the ocean,
Tiber, and Arno, and Cisalpine Po,
Beholding that bright face, the fond emotion
Of country comes to them on bended knees:

O Margherita la superba, — Queen!
In this New World which thy great Genoese
Gave to mankind, — thou hast one lover here
Who bows before thy majesty of mien,
And for thy land's sake holds thine image dear.

ON A HEAD OF HERMIONE

PAINTED BY WILLIAM WILLARD

Look on this lady! and behold in her
What women could be, and what women were,
In days gone by, before the excess of books
Had weighed their natures down and marred their looks:
A face that could not frown, and if it smile,
Reveals a soul incapable of guile;
Spirito gentil! believing others clean,
Thinking no scandal, noting nothing mean;
As far away from sourness as from vanity,
Perfect in purity, — not Puritanity.

TO A LADY

WITH A HEAD OF DIANA

My Christmas gifts were few: to one
A fan, to keep love's flame alive,
Since even to the constant sun
Twilight and setting must arrive;

And to another — she who sent
That splendid toy, an empty purse —
I gave, though not for satire meant,
An emptier thing — a scrap of verse;

For thee I chose Diana's head,
Graved by a cunning hand in Rome,
To whose dim shop my feet were led
By sweet remembrances of home.

'T was with a kind of pagan feeling
That I my little treasure bought, —
My mood I care not for concealing, —
"Great is Diana!" was my thought.

Methought, howe'er we change our creeds,
Whether to Jove or God we bend,
By various paths religion leads
All spirits to a single end.

The goddess of the woods and fields,
The healthful huntress, undefiled,
Now with her fabled brother yields
To sinless Mary and her child.

But chastity and truth remain
Still the same virtues as of yore,
Whether we kneel in Christian fane
Or old mythologies adore.

What though the symbol were a lie, —
Since the ripe world hath wiser grown, —
If any goodness grew thereby,
I will not scorn it for mine own.

So I selected Dian's head
From out the artist's glittering show;
And this shall be my gift, I said,
To one that bears the silver bow;

To her whose quiet life has been
The mirror of as calm a heart;

Above temptation from the din
Of cities, and the pomp of art;

Who still hath spent her active days
Cloistered amid her happy hills,
Not ignorant of worldly ways,
But loving more the woods and rills.

And thou art she to whom I give
This image of the virgin queen,
Praying that thou, like her, mayst live
Thrice blest! in being seldom seen.

WITH A GIFT OF LILY-BUDS

Lilies lightly come in spring
Where they find best blossoming:
Edwin's grandchild! rosy-pale,
When these lilies of the vale
Warm their hearts in thy soft hand,
Thou shalt see their buds expand
As one after April snows
Sees blue violets' eyes unclose.

Mine be only winter flowers,
Nursed through many sunless hours
In her chamber, late who lay
Dying many a bitter day,
Counting every stroke of bell
All night long, till morning fell
On her spirit — like a cloud;
Some of these lay on her shroud.

Take them! touch them — let them see
Those fair eyes, and straightway be
Fully blown; then kiss thy lips,
And their sweet breath in thy room,

Though the sun were in eclipse,
  Shall be sunshine and perfume ;
Touch but thy finger tips
  My tender buds, and they will bloom.

WATCHING THE RIVER

All to the rich doth not belong,
Nor to the proud the whole world's peace:
Here in these woods are books and song,
Labors and loves that never cease:
From care we revel in release,
And seek not what we could not find,
Glory in gold — but look within,
Hoping our harvest in the mind.

Not learning of the learned sort,
Not wisdom of the worldly wise
(We live remote and life is short),
But such as comes to common eyes:
To watch Antares at his rise,
The Greater and the Lesser Bear,
To find Andromeda, or tell
The stars of Cassiopeia's chair.

Wise men and true in cities dwell,
But ah! one dwells there — Discontent!
With whom to live, if less than hell,
Is like it: there of late I went;

To my friend's door my steps I bent,
And found him pillowed — not in pain,
But watchers by; he knew me not:
Midnight was brooding on his brain!

O God! that good man — oh! for gold,
For gold that father, friend, high-priest
Of all the charities, had sold
His faculties, and now the least
Of all that ministered — his beast —
Might have stood sovereign over him:
No motion in the mind — that brow —
Thought's beacon tower, and now so dim!

Never again, my soul, repine
That I have nothing, having all:
Health and myself, and love like thine,
Dearest, who shar'st my humble hall!
Nor ever be my soul a thrall
To avarice or ambition vain:
Heaven shield me from the hardened heart
That brings the softness to the brain!

NÆNIA AMORIS

Should love return before I die,
If haply love could live so long,
He will not come with smile or sigh,
Nor wake in me the gift of song.

No, rather with a lordly scorn
I would receive the fatal trust,
For pleasures out of season born
Are ashes at the core, and dust.

And beauty's eyes might plead in vain,
And music's voice intone forever —
I should hear nothing in the strain
But one sad note of never, never.

THINK NOT OF ME AMID THE CROWD

THINK not of me amid the crowd
Where with her finery and her bells
The fashion of the world is loud,
And woman shows the charms she sells.

I would not have my image rise
Among those phantoms of the street,
That pirouette like a pack of flies
And idly as they came retreat.

Give them a glance and let them pass,
Forgot as they were born to be,
But in their multitudinous mass,
O lady! never mingle me.

Rather in life's lone hour, dear love!
And thy still chamber's inmost place,
Set in thy thought my bust above
All other forms and every face;

Or when thy cheek is dewed with tears
On some dark day when friends depart,

When life before thee seems all fears
And all remembrance one long smart,

Then in the secret sacred cell
Thy soul keeps for her hour of prayer,
Breathe but my name, that I may dwell
Part of thy worship alway there.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Our last rose left us long ago ;
Then the ripe berries came and went ;
The tides run high that late were low,
And midsummer is well-nigh spent.

A lonely primrose at the gate
Hangs wilted, watching for her wheels ;
Lady, the lily says — 't is late,
Our high-top orchard slighted feels,

And the rank burdock spreads apace,
Fell harbor of the venomous fly,
And in the sweetbrier's wonted place
The deadly nightshade drooping by

The garden wall begins to move
Of sadness in my thought a touch, —
A fancy I would fain reprove
And dare not dwell on overmuch, —

The shadow of a passing doubt
I never uttered unto men;
'T is this, — what were my life without
Her — should she never come again!

EPITAPH ON A CHILD

This little seed of life and love,
Just lent us for a day,
Came like a blessing from above, —
Passed like a dream away.

And when we garnered in the earth
The foison that was ours,
We felt that burial was but birth
To spirits, as to flowers.

And still that benediction stays,
Although its angel passed:
Dear God! thy ways, if bitter ways,
We learn to love at last.

But for the dream, — it broke indeed,
Yet still great comfort gives:
What was a dream is now our creed, —
We know our darling lives.

STANZAS

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of."

I

We have forgot what we have been,
And what we are we little know;
We fancy new events begin,
But all has happened long ago.

II

Through many a verse life's poem flows,
But still, though seldom marked by men,
At times returns the constant close;
Still the old chorus comes again.

III

The childish grief, the boyish fear,
The hope in manhood's breast that burns,
The doubt, the transport, and the tear,
Each mood, each impulse, oft returns.

IV

Before mine infant eyes had hailed
The new-born glory of the day,
When the first wondrous morn unveiled
The breathing world that round me lay,

V

The same strange darkness o'er my brain
Folded its close, mysterious wings,
The ignorance of joy or pain
That each recurring midnight brings.

VI

And oft my feelings make me start,
Like footprints on some desert shore,
As if the chambers of my heart
Had heard their shadowy step before.

VII

So, looking into thy fond eyes,
Strange memories come to me, as though
Somewhere — perchance in Paradise —
I had adored thee long ago.

SLEEP

Somnus — or Morpheus was his name?
I have forgot; I cannot keep
My schoolboy learning: as it came
It went — I mean the god of sleep.

That god and I were once fast friends,
But now his face I seldom see;
More oft the blessed rain descends
In Egypt, than his dews on me.

Ah me! the joy I had in dreams —
The nightly comfort to forget —
Is mine no more; the morning beams
On eyes like faded asters, wet:

Yes, moistened oft with poisonous tears,
Till the burnt lashes look so few,
You might suppose that threescore years
Were mine, instead of thirty-two!

Well, I can wait a little more,
A little longer wake and weep,

Until the welcome grave restore
The bliss of an unbroken sleep.

Let me remember Him that while
His tired disciples round Him slept —
(The sinless born, that knew no guile!) —
Watched in Gethsemane, and wept.

TO A "MAGDALEN"

A PAINTING BY GUIDO

I

MARY, when thou wert a virgin,
Ere the first, the fatal sin
Stole into thy bosom's chamber,
Leading six companions in;
Ere those eyes had wept an error,
What thy beauty must have been!

II

Ere those lips had paled their crimson,
Quivering with the soul's despair,
Ere the smile they wore had withered
In thine agony of prayer,
Or, instead of pearls, the tear-drops
Gleamed amid thy streaming hair;

III

While, in ignorance of evil,
Still thy heart serenely dreamed,
And the morning light of girlhood
On thy cheeks' young garden beamed,

Where the abundant rose was blushing,
Not of earth couldst thou have seemed!

IV

When thy frailty fell upon thee,
Lovely wert thou, even then;
Shame itself could scarce disarm thee
Of the charms that vanquished men.
Which of Salem's purest daughters
Matched the sullied Magdalen?

V

But thy Master's eye beheld thee,
Foul and all unworthy heaven;
Pitied, pardoned, purged thy spirit
Of its black, pernicious leaven;
Drove the devils from out the temple —
All the dark, the guilty seven.

VI

Oh, the beauty of repentance!
Mary, tenfold fairer now
Art thou with disheveled tresses,
And that anguish on thy brow!
Ah, might every sinful sister
Grow in beauty, even as thou!

THE GROOMSMAN TO HIS MISTRESS

I

Every wedding, says the proverb,
Makes another, soon or late;
Never yet was any marriage
Entered in the book of Fate,
But the names were also written
Of the patient pair that wait.

II

Blessings, then, upon the morning
When my friend, with fondest look,
By the solemn rites' permission,
To himself his mistress took,
And the Destinies recorded
Other two within their book.

III

While the priest fulfilled his office,
Still the ground the lovers eyed,
And the parents and the kinsmen
Aimed their glances at the bride,

But the groomsmen eyed the virgins
Who were waiting at her side.

IV

Three there were that stood beside her;
One was dark, and one was fair,
But nor fair nor dark the other,
Save her Arab eyes and hair;
Neither dark nor fair I call her,
Yet she was the fairest there.

V

While her groomsman — shall I own it?
Yes, to thee, and only thee —
Gazed upon this dark-eyed maiden
Who was fairest of the three,
Thus he thought: "How blest the bridal
Where the bride were such as she!"

VI

Then I mused upon the adage,
Till my wisdom was perplexed,
And I wondered, as the churchman
Dwelt upon his holy text,
Which of all who heard his lesson
Should require the service next.

VII

Whose will be the next occasion
  For the flowers, the feast, the wine?
Thine, perchance, my dearest lady,
  Or, who knows? — it may be mine:
What if 't were — forgive the fancy —
  What if 't were — both mine and thine?

"SOTTO L'USBERGO DEL SENTIRSI PURO"

Brush not the floor where my lady hath trod,
  Lest one light sign of her foot you mar;
For where she hath walked, in the Spring, on the sod,
  There, I have noticed, most violets are.

Touch not her work, nor her book, nor a thing
  That her exquisite finger hath only pressed;
But fan the dust off with a plume that the wing
  Of a ring-dove let fall, on his way to his nest.

I think the sun stops, if a moment she stand,
  In the morn, sometimes, at her father's door;
And the brook where she may have dipt her hand
  Runs clearer to me than it did before.

Under the mail of "I know me pure,"
  I dare to dream of her; and, by day,
As oft as I come to her presence, I 'm sure
  Had I one low thought, she would look it away.

"LIKE AS THE LARK"

"Quale allodetta che in aere si spazia
Prima cantando, e poi tace, contenta
Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia."
DANTE: *Paradiso, XX.*

LIKE as the lark that, soaring higher and higher,
Singeth awhile, then stops as 't were content
With his last sweetness, having filled desire,
So paused our bard; not for his force was spent,
Nor that a string was loosened in his lyre,
But, having said his best and done his best,
He could not better what was given before,
And threescore years and ten, demanding rest,
Whispered, *They want thee on the other shore!*
And now he walks amid the learned throng,
Haply with him who was the sixth of those
Who towered above the multitude in song,
Or by the side of Geoffrey Chaucer goes,
Who shall remember with his wonted smile
How James found music in his antique style.
But we 'll not mingle fancies with our sorrow
Nor from his own imagination borrow;

Holmes, who is left us, best could speak his praise
Who knew his heart so well and loved his lays,
And whom Heaven crowns with greater length of
days.

INSCRIPTION

FOR AN ALMS CHEST MADE OF CAMPHOR-WOOD

This fragrant box that breathes of India's balms
Hath one more fragrance, — for it asketh alms;
But though 't is sweet and blessed to receive,
You know who said, "It is more blest to give:"
Give, then, receive his blessing; and for me
Thy silent boon sufficient blessing be!

If Ceylon's isle, that bears the bleeding trees,
With any perfume load the orient breeze;
If Heber's Muse, by Ceylon as he sailed,
A pleasant odor from the shore inhaled, —
More lives in me; for underneath my lid
A sweetness as of sacrifice is hid.

Thou gentle almoner, in passing by,
Smell of my wood, and scan me with thine eye:
I, too, from Ceylon bear a spicy breath
That might put warmness in the lungs of death;
A simple chest of scented wood I seem;
But oh! within me lurks a golden beam, —

A beam celestial, and a silver din,
As though imprisoned angels played within;
Hushed in my heart, my fragrant secret dwells:
If thou wouldst learn it, Paul of Tarsus tells;
No jangled brass nor tinkling cymbal sound,
For in my bosom Charity is found.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

"Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome then; no planets strike;
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm, —
So gracious and so hallowed is the time."

O BIRD of dawning! all the night
Sing! for the season is at hand
When hearts are glad, and faces bright,
And happiness is Heaven's command:
Shout, chanticleer! that all may hear
Whom cares have chastened through the year:
Christmas is come to cheer the land!

And now no spirit walks — but one
Of love, nor shall that spirit cease:
No planet rules — except the Sun
Of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace!
And that whose ray first led the way
To where the babe in Bethlehem lay —
The star that ne'er shall know decrease.

EASTER HYMN

CHERUBINI

Who is this that comes from Edom,
All his raiment bright with blood?
Lord of love and life and freedom,
Lifting man from death's dark flood.

Bring fresh roses for adorning
Temple stairs and sacred aisle;
Ever be this Easter morning
Welcomed with triumphal smile.

Rose of Sharon! for his altar
Lilies of the valley bring;
Sing from David's holy psalter
Anthems to our Heavenly King!

My Redeemer, — that he liveth
Well I know; and we believe
God, who every blessing giveth,
Man of hope will not bereave.

Never more shall mortal sorrow
  Wake in human hearts despair;
Never shall the doubtful morrow
  Crush beyond our strength to bear.

No more fear of death forever!
  Angels watch by every grave;
When the soul and body sever
  They will come, and He shall save.

Pomp of organs! virgin voices!
  Mingle music for the morn
When the soul of man rejoices
  O'er his new life, deathless born.

TO A POET IN THE CITY

Cherish thy muse! for life hath little more,
Save what we hold in common with the herd:
Oh, blessing of these woods! to walk unstirred
By clash of commerce and the city's roar!
What finds the scholar in those flaming walls
But wearied people, hurrying to and fro,
Most with too high, and many without aim,
Crowded in vans or sweltering in huge halls
To hear loud emptiness or see the show?
Were this a life to 'scape the Muses' blame?
Rather than such would I the Parcæ ask,
Folding mine arms, to stretch me on the floor
Where Agamemnon in his golden mask
Dreams not of Argolis or Argos more.

SONNET

ON A PHOTOGRAPH OF AN UNKNOWN LADY, SENT IN A LETTER

SMILE on and be my sunlight for a while,
Face that I fain would look at for a day!
Who is the lady? Comes she to our isle?
Knows she the color of our Wayland clay?
She never came here nor will ever come
To see our meadows and their wealth of hay,
And the slow Sudbury stream, fringed all the way
With lilies lovely as herself, almost.
She never can, and therefore I am dumb,
And on her beauty gazing like a ghost,
Or some enchanted spirit chained thereto,
Can only whisper to my heart, "Alas!
Such were the faces Carlo Dolci drew,
But we, poor souls! may only glance and pass."

TO THE NEW ROYALL PROFESSOR

Learn'd in the law, who leav'st the busy street
And studious chambers for the gownèd chair,
Amid the cordial friends that speak thee fair
And thine accession to the laurel greet,
If one slow scholar in his hushed retreat
A little longer than the rest forbear,
'T is but as minstrels that salute some heir
Wait for still night to make their flutes more sweet.
And as in heaven there is more joy o'er one
Repentant worldling than o'er ninety-nine
Good men who love the world or make it loved,
So glad Athena glories in the son
Who turns in manhood to his boyhood's shrine,
And Harvard welcomes him with hand ungloved.

"O YE SWEET HEAVENS!"

O YE sweet heavens! your silence is to me
More than all music. With what full delight
I come down to my dwelling by the sea
And look from out the lattice on the night!
There the same glories burn serene and bright
As in my boyhood; and if I am old
Are they not also? Thus my spirit is bold
To think perhaps we are coeval. Who
Can tell when first my faculty began
Of thought? Who knows but I was there with you
When first your Maker's mind, celestial spheres,
Contrived your motion ere I was a man?
Else, wherefore do mine eyes thus fill with tears
As I, O Pleiades! your beauty scan?

ΥΠΝΟΣ

Not now for sleep, O slumber-god! we sue;
Hypnus! not sleep, but give our souls repose!
Of the day's music such a mellowing close
As might have rested Shakespeare from his art,
Or soothed the spirit of the Tuscan strong
Who best read life, its passions and its woes,
And wrought of sorrow earth's divinest song.
Bring us a mood that might have lulled Mozart;
Not stupor, not forgetfulness, not dreams,
But vivid sense of what is best and rarest,
And sweet remembrance of the blessed few,
In the real presence of this fair world's fairest:
A spell of peace — as 't were by those dear streams
Boccaccio wrote of, when romance was new.

SONNET XIII

FROM THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

So gentle seems my lady and so pure
When she greets any one, that scarce the eye
Such modesty and brightness can endure,
And the tongue, trembling, falters in reply.
She never heeds, when people praise her worth, —
Some in their speech, and many with a pen, —
But meekly moves, as if sent down to earth
To show another miracle to men!
And such a pleasure from her presence grows
On him who gazeth, while she passeth by, —
A sense of sweetness that no mortal knows
Who hath not felt it, — that the soul's repose
Is woke to worship, and a spirit flows
Forth from her face that seems to whisper, "Sigh!"

SONNET

"Then are they glad because they are at rest: and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be." — *Psalter.*

THERE loomed a great shape lately scarce in sight
Of Scituate cliffs, — a mountain mid the mist;
Perchance an Indiaman, we said; but hist!
Heard you that gun-stroke, out by yonder light?
Then the fog thickened in the gathering night;
No further signal heard (save that dread one
Which brings back terror even as I write)
Of the mysterious wanderer; nor is known
Aught else of her — but that she comes no more.
O unknown mourners! watchers of the sea
By many a lonely fireside on the shore,
One thing is sure: He brought them to the breast
Of that calm haven where you fain would be;
And they are glad — because they are at rest.

BEN DELL' INTELLETTO

WHENEVER *Good of Intellect* comes in,
Then peace is with us, and a soft control
Of all harsh thinking; and but one desire
Fills every bosom, — to forget the din
Of outside things, and render up the soul
To friendship's banquet by an evening fire.
Then is the season in this world of sin
That brings new strength, and keepeth us heart-whole
Amid the changes that distress and tire;
And when from wisdom we have wanderers been,
So that a stupor on the spirit stole
From things unknown, with visions dark and dire,
In this high presence we restore ourselves
More than by all the volumes on our shelves.

TURNING FROM DARWIN TO THOMAS AQUINAS

Unless in thought with thee I often live,
Angelic doctor! life seems poor to me.
What are these bounties, if they only be
Such boon as farmers to their servants give?
That I am fed, and that mine oxen thrive,
That my lambs fatten, that mine hours are free —
These ask my nightly thanks on bended knee;
And I do thank Him who hath blest my hive,
And made content my herd, my flock, my bee.
But, Father! nobler things I ask from Thee.
Fishes have sunshine, worms have everything!
Are we but apes? Oh! give me, God, to know
I am death's master; not a scaffolding,
But a true temple where Christ's word could grow.

MERCEDES

Scarce grown to womanhood, to die a Queen!
Montpensier's daughter, what a fate was thine!
Youngest and loveliest of that Bourbon line
So long chief actors in the mingled scene
Of state and sway — the scaffold and the axe;
Spiritui tuo sit æterna Pax!
Thy tragedy shall keep thy cypress green,
And Isabella's name shall be to Spain
Less dear a memory than the tender tale
Of thy young love and wedlock — and the wail
That closed the marriage pæan, and the rain
Of sudden tears, as when an August cloud
Bursts mid the sunshine. Oh, how cold and pale
Alfonso, when he kissed thee in thy shroud!

IN SAINT JOSEPH'S

While the priest said "*perpetua luceat*,"
Sprinkling the palms that graced a maiden's bier,
I felt a light stream in upon my soul;
And one that near me in the chancel sate,
Who was to the departed soul most dear,
Saw the same light, as my hand softly stole
To hers, and suddenly a glory played
Around those palms that seemed to check my breath;
Even as he prayed for light the darkness fled
To both of us: I looked into her eyes
And saw through tears a raptured look that said —
A strength new-born doth in my spirit rise,
And though before me lies my sister dead,
I also feel the life that lives in death.

SONNET

Lift me, Lord Jesus, for the time is nigh
When I must climb unto thy cross at last;
The world fades out, its lengthening shadows fly,
Earth's pomp is passing and the music past;
Phantoms flock round me, multiplying fast;
Nothing seems tangible; the good I thought
Most permanent hath perished. Come away,
O sated spirit, from the vacant scene;
The curtain drops upon the spun-out play,
The benches are deserted. Let us go,
Forget the foolish clown, the king, the queen,
The idle story with its love and woe;
I seem to stand before a minster screen
And hear faint organs in the distance blow.

PROEM TO A TRANSLATION OF MANZONI'S ODE ON THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

(IL CINQUE MAGGIO)

INSCRIBED TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

I

READ what the Christian poet saith,
O lady! in my faithful rhyme,
Of the great Captain and his death;
And venerate, with me, that Faith
Which, in the aspiring man of crime,
Whom gentle goodness must abhor, —
Who carried into every clime
The fury and the waste of war, —
Some seeds of pardon can discern;
Yea, from his dying pillow learn
A lesson worthy of the solemn strain
That long as all his triumphs shall remain.

II

Him and his history of blood,
Him and the ruin that he made,

By Moskwa's rivulet and Egypt's flood,
All his bad victories, displayed
On many an arch and boastful pile
That wake the wandering Briton's smile
To find no name of England there: —
These can the lenient Muse recall,
And breathe forgiveness over all,
With a majestic power.

III

Child of his time, the poet speaks
Such thoughts as to the time belong;
No more his private malice wreaks
In the small vengeance of a song:
That day of doom — that bitter day,
When Hate sate sovran o'er his lay,
And bade him, in his burning line,
To an eternal curse consign
God's universe, — hath passed away.

IV

For, men who seem to shape their age,
Yea, fashion history to their will,
And on Fame's perdurable page
Write their own record, good or ill, —
Even these, if rightly scanned,
Are but the ivory keys upon the board,

Moving, to lose or win,
By force of mitre, crown, or sword, —
Yet all their little leaps have been
Directed by a wiser hand!

V

Therefore the gracious Lombard muse, benign
Interpreter of Rome,
Finds in this Attila one spark divine,
That hath in heaven its home;
So welcomes him to his eternal rest!
With such high music as befits the blest.

VI

Not so the grave Etrurian lyre
Had sounded, in that sterner age
When vengeance thrilled the quivering wire,
When what the poet thought was fire,
And what he said was rage;
When the great Ghibelline, gloomy and unsparing,
Moved like Fate's shadow, at his girdle wearing
Peter's lent keys, — the while his iron hand
Held Pluto's passport to the sunless land!

VII

He, to these images of wrong
Wherewith his unforgiving heart

Peopled the pitiless realm of his dark song —
To Dionysius and his tyrant throng
  Had added Bonaparte:
And with the rest of that fell brood, —
  Pyrrhus, and Obizzo the fair,
  And the grim Paduan with the raven hair, —
  Had sunk him in that river of despair,
To drink his fill of blood.

VIII

But He that, in the midst of wrath,
  Remembers mercy still,
Reveals by Calvary a path
  Conducting out of ill,
Into the glad, immortal fields above,
Where his great justice is allayed by Love.
Be this our trust: and may the lofty bard
  Who rules the Latin minstrelsy to-day
Soften within us what is harsh or hard.
  Here calumny should cease —
Peace for the weary soldier let us pray,
Since by that lone and lowly death-bed lay
  His cross, — who was the Prince of Peace.

"O REST OF GOD"

"Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano,
E sarai meco, senza fine, cive
Di quella Roma onde Cristo e Romano."
DANTE: *Purgatorio.*

O REST of God that endeth every pain!
O smile serene of peace that shall remain!
O birth of being! when this faulty frame
Falls into nothingness and Death 's a name:
Hope, no more heartache, with possession blest,
Come to full fruit, possessing and possessed;
Earth's passions perishing, now love alone
Springs to its natural growth beside God's throne.

Bright soul! beloved best of best and wise,
True-hearted woman of the dauntless eyes
That looked on death without dismay, and saw
The future dawning with abated awe,
A little while a sylvan thou shalt dwell
In silent chambers of the woodland fell,
But no long time; already to thy sense
The calm is perfect that we saw commence

Ere the last breath had left thy lip, the while
Heaven's light seemed breaking on that parting
smile!
And we believe that, sure as June will bring
Blossoms and bees and all the race that sing,
In God's good season, such a love as thine
Must vindicate its love in courts divine,
Strong in those words that all resembling thee
Shall one day hear, — "Ye did it unto me."

MORNING DREAMS

"Presso al mattin del ver si sogna." — DANTE.

LOVE, let 's be thankful we are past the time
When griefs are comfortless; and, though we mourn,
Feel in our sorrow something now sublime,
And in each tear the sweetness of a kiss.
Weep on and smile, then, for we know in this
Our immortality, — that nothing dies
Within our hearts, but something new is born,
And what is roughly taken from our eyes
Gently comes back in visions of the morn,
When dreams are truest. Oh, but death is bliss!
I feel as certain, looking on the face
Of a dead sister, smiling from her shroud,
That our sweet angel hath but changed her place,
And passed to peace, as when, amid the crowd
Of the mad city, I feel sure of rest
Beyond the hills, . . . a few hours further west.

PARAPHRASE OF A PASSAGE IN DANTE

PARADISO, CANTO XXI

The poet meets in Paradise the spirit of San Pietro Damiano, a man famous in his time for the purity and austerity of his life, and for his endeavors to reform the dissolute habits of the Romish clergy in that age, and the pompous luxury of their prelates.

It is supposed that he was born in Ravenna, about 1007. Having withdrawn from the world into the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, he was called from this retirement and employed in many important missions, in which he showed so much ability that he was made Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia. Landino says that he was not merely called, but forcibly compelled to this dignity.

The subjoined paraphrase has so little claim to any exactness, that the thirty lines of the original have been amplified into ninety. It is hoped there may be found a closer adherence to the *spirit* of the text — and of San Damiano.

Between the Hadrian and the Tyrrhene shores,
And not far distant from the Tuscan line,
A jutting crag above the thunder soars,
Cresting with ridgy rocks the Apennine.
Catria 't is called, and oft the tempest roars
Down in the region of the fig and vine,

While sunny Catria shines in cloudless June;
And at its foot a consecrated cell
From the rough granite opens, rudely-hewn,
A fit abode for one who bids farewell
To life's harsh jar, desiring to attune
His thoughts to heaven, and in seclusion dwell.

There, in my peaceful hermitage, serene,
I with so constant zeal my God obeyed,
That, with continual fasts and vigils lean,
Through summer heats and winter frosts I prayed.
Clad in a garment like my Saviour's mean,
Of simple olives my repast I made;

And, on the great hereafter wholly bent,
Weeding the garden of my soul from sin,
The lonely meditative hours I spent,
Above the busy world's distracting din.
And joyous, in my rocky cloister pent,
Abundant harvests did I gather in,

Upon that bleak and barren cliff, to pour
Into the garners of the Lord. Alas!
That sacred seat is hallowed now no more
By morning orisons or midnight mass,
Or sandaled anchorite that numbers o'er
His holy beads as the slow moments pass.

But now, sole occupant, the lizard crawls
  At noonday round my desolate retreat;
Nor ever sanctified are those rude walls
  By the blest echoes of a pilgrim's feet;
And with a low, reproachful murmur falls
  The rill beside my old accustomed seat,

Where, day by day, at Avellana's fount,
  By men Pietro Damiano named,
Strict in my stewardship's exact account,
  And through Romagna for my penance famed,
I sat and mused on mine adopted mount,
  Serving my Master with a life unblamed.

Ah! what availed it that an abbey rose
  With pillared pomp my modest rock to grace;
In those cold aisles Devotion's essence froze.
  Dearer to Heaven was that sequestered place
Which for my chapel and my cave I chose,
  Wherein, recluse, to run my godly race.

But Honors came, and Pomp found out my nest,
  And like a weak hare I was hunted down;
They planted vanities within my breast,
  And robed my shoulders with the scarlet gown.
Then my long days of pensiveness and rest
  Were poorly bartered for the world's renown.

To Rome they dragged me, and my thin white
hairs
Were by the Cardinal's red hat concealed;
There the harsh lessons of my daily cares
Disclosed new truths and hidden wrongs re-
vealed,
For soon I learned how oft the priesthood wears
Its reverend garb for Vice a mask and shield;

I saw the pride, the falsehood of their state;
I saw the low, the sensual, and the vain,
Implored for pardon and dispensing fate;
I saw them fawn and flatter, trick and feign;
I saw their outward smiles and hidden hate,
Their lust and luxury, and thirst for gain.

Saint Peter, barefoot, on his mission came;
And Paul, a "chosen vase," in whom was poured
So lavishly the heavenly Spirit's flame,
Snatched his chance meal at any casual board,
And, reckoning honest poverty no shame,
Above all wants in lofty virtue soared.

Oft in the Lateran I thought of this,
Amid the tinseled priests' tumultuous tread,
As on the congregations, bowed submiss,
Its fragrant shower the fuming censer shed;

And some stooped low the foot of him to kiss
Whose Master "had not where to lay his head."

And when I've seen, on some high holiday,
Through the live streets their long processions roll,
And the fat, ermined friars, on palfreys gay, —
Both creatures covered with one furry stole, —
Him I remembered, robed in mean array,
Who entered Zion on an ass's foal.

He like an humble peasant meekly rode,
While shouted forth Jerusalem a song,
And with palm-boughs his gladsome pathway strewed;
Our modern pastors need a hand full strong
On either side to prop their helpless load;
O patience! patience! that endur'st so long!

GUIDO'S AURORA

IN THE ROSPIGLIOSI PALACE, ROME

"La concubina di Titan antico
Già s' imbiancava al balco d' oriente,
Fuor delle braccia del suo dolce amico;
Di gemme la sua fronte era lucente."

DANTE: *Purgatorio, IX.*

FORTH from the arms of her beloved now,
Whitening the Orient steep, the Concubine
Of old Tithonus comes, her lucent brow
Glistening with gems, her fair hands filled with flowers,
That drop their violet odors on the brine,
While from her girdle pours a wealth of pearls
Round ocean's rocks and every vessel's prow
That cuts the laughing billow's crested curls.
Behind her step the busy, sober Hours,
With much to do, — and they must move apace:
Wake up, Apollo! should the women stir,
And thou be lagging? brighten up thy face!
(Those eyes of Phaeton more brilliant were.)
Hurry, dull god! Hyperion, to thy race!

Thy steeds are galloping, but thou seem'st slow:
  Hesper, glad wretch, hath newly fed his torch,
And flies before thee, and the world cries, Go!
  Light the dark woods, the dew-drenched moun-
    tain scorch!
Phœbus, Aurora calls, why linger so?

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

A PICTURE BY SCHEFFER

You restless ghosts that roam the lurid air,
I feel your misery, — for I was there;
Yea, not in dreams, but breathing and alive
Have seen the storm, and heard the tempest drive:
Yet while the sleet went, withering as it past,
And the mad hail gave scourges to the blast,
While all was black below and flame above,
Have thought, —'t is little to the storm of Love:
You know that sadly, know it to your cost,
Ah! too much loving, and forever lost!

Still, suffering spirits, even your doom affords
Kisses and tears, however scant of words;
Brief is your story, but it liveth long, —
Oh, thank for that your poet and his song!
Be it some comfort, in that hateful Hell,
You had a lover of your love to tell;
One that knew all — the ecstasy, the gloom,
All the sad raptures that precede the tomb,
The fluttering hope, the triumph, and the care,
The wild emotion, and the sure despair.

Not every friend hath friendship's finer touch,
To pardon passion, when it mounts too much;
Not every soul hath proved its own excess,
And feared the throb it still would not repress.
But he whose numbers gave you unto fame,
Lord of the lay, — I need not speak his name, —
Was one who felt; whose life was love or hate;
Born for extremes, he scorned the middle state;
And well he knew that, since the world began,
The heart was master in the world of man.

IN ECLIPSE

Prayer strengthens us; but oft we faint
And find no courage even to pray;
Oh, that in Heaven some pitying saint
For me might Ave-Mary say!

For sometimes present pleasures drown
The serious vein, and some dark days
Of great, o'ermastering anguish frown
Amid the sacred tapers' blaze.

Before the morning-watch I rose —
I say before this morn's — to kneel,
But of my voice the fountain froze,
Yea, something seemed my soul to seal.

And now I know what rosaries mean:
That oftentimes the heart is weak,
And cannot to the Sire unseen
Its dumb petition duly speak.

Yet every bead may count with Him,
Who healed the palsied and the blind,

Restored the lame and withered limb,
And lifted the disordered mind,

As mine was then, who had no might
Of utterance with mine icy lips,
For one great Shadow veiled the light
Till hope itself was in eclipse.

Eclipses come, and also pass;
Let us not dream like savage men,
With shouts and cries and sounding brass
To scare that Shadow off again;

But take the phases of our thought,
As of the planets — wanderers they,
Even as ourselves, but better taught,
Through gloom or glory, to obey —

As of the moon, that many times
Conceals in clouds her crescent sheen,
But when her fullness cometh, climbs
Above Orion's front, serene.

LUCERNA SIS PEDIBUS MEIS

Lamp to my feet! shine forth into my soul
That I may better see what way I tread
In the dark hours and when I lose control
Of mine own steps, by vague desires misled.
In faltering moments, when I scarce can pray,
Through failing faith, or wandering thoughts, and sink
Back to my bondage, let thy kindly ray,
Lamp to my feet! prevent me on the brink.

PARADISI GLORIA

"O frate mio! ciascuna e cittadina
D'una vera città" . . . .

THERE is a city, builded by no hand,
And unapproachable by sea or shore,
And unassailable by any band
Of storming soldiery for evermore.

There we no longer shall divide our time
By acts or pleasures, — doing petty things
Of work or warfare, merchandise or rhyme;
But we shall sit beside the silver springs

That flow from God's own footstool, and behold
Sages and martyrs, and those blessed few
Who loved us once and were beloved of old,
To dwell with them and walk with them anew,

In alternations of sublime repose,
Musical motion, the perpetual play
Of every faculty that Heaven bestows
Through the bright, busy, and eternal day.

SURSUM CORDA!

WHENCE comes this peace? In truth it doth surpass
Man's understanding — who can tell me whence?
Wretched I was and weak, and went to mass
In such dismay as unbelief will bring, —
A thing of iron with a heart of brass.
But even as I knelt a peace immense
Flooded my soul; a voice began to sing
Asperges me, and then I shall be clean,
Oh, sprinkle me with hyssop! if you can
Thereby make white again as Wayland snow
Drifted in orchards this worn spirit of mine,
And I will come again, thou white-robed man,
And through the mist of many things divine
Shall at thy Sursum Corda! leap from woe.

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

Page 2. *Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.*

It is told of Dante that, when he was roaming over Italy, he came to a certain monastery, where he was met by one of the friars, who blessed him, and asked what was his desire; to which the weary stranger simply answered, "Pace."

Page 63. *So the young master of the Roman realm.* — Alexander Severus.

Page 65. *To wed the Assabet and take thy name.*

> "Rura quæ Liris quietis
> Mordet aquis, taciturnus amnis."
>
> HORACE.

The Sudbury flows through Wayland meadows to meet the Assabet and form the Concord River, which joins the Merrimac in Lowell. It may be considered the Liris of New England.

Page 65. *Meek lover of the good, though under spell.*

> "But thou, meek lover of the good!
> Find me, and turn thy back on heaven."
>
> EMERSON in *Brahma.*

Page 65. *Of those who, dazzled by some sundog's ray.*

"Sundog" is a word hardly known in England; but in New England is applied to the luminous counterfeit of the sun occasionally seen here, — a mock-sun easily mistaken for the god himself.

Page 66. *These gentle pagans to their straw-built shed.*

"Pagan" is used here in its original sense of rustics, people who prefer to dwell, or who must dwell, in villages or places like "Brook Farm," which Hawthorne has celebrated in his "Blithedale Romance."

Page 66. *In Sleepy Hollow, and the word "forgive."*

The Lord's Prayer was said at Emerson's grave by all the assembled mourners.

Page 66. *In yonder grave thy Druid lies.*

"Long, long thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes:
O vales and wildwood, shall he say —
In yonder grave your Druid lies!"

COLLINS.

Page 74. "*Peace to thee, Mark! evangelist of mine!*"

The legend of the winged Lion of St. Mark, seen everywhere at Venice, — "Pax tibi, Marce! Evangelista meus."

Page 100. DECEMBER FOURTEENTH.

Calcutta, Dec. 20, 1871.

"All sorts and conditions of men" in this great Empire — Jews, Hindoos, Mahommedans, Parsees, etc., as well as the different denominations of Christians — have, during the past fortnight, offered up prayers for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. On the 14th day of this month (a great Mahommedan festival — the "Eeed-al-Ramzan") a thousand Suni Mahommedans of all castes assembled for prayer in the great Mosque endowed by the sect at Bombay, and a leading member of the Suni Khoja Mahommedans prayed the Almighty for the recovery of the Prince. The day is said to have been selected as a peculiarly holy one, and the prayers to have been most fervent. A Mahommedan prayer-meeting will sound oddly to some good people in England, but it cannot fail to be pleasing to the Queen and the Royal Family to know that from men of all creeds in this great part of Her Majesty's dominions there has arisen one common and, I am sure, sincere prayer to the Great Father of all, entreating Him to spare the Heir to England's Throne. — Letter to the London *Times*.

Page 100. *Those dark-eyed Persians in their Hindu fanes.*

The Parsees, or fire-worshipers.

Page 111. *While the camels, resting round him, half alarmed the sullen ox.*

Near Pisa a herd of camels is kept, upon a farm belonging to the Grand Duke. The ancestors of these animals were brought thither during the Crusades. Some of them are employed in the work of the farm, and others may be met straying about in the pine-woods or along the sands of the coast.

"These sands, with the sea, the camels, the purity and brightness of the sky, the solitude and silence, give this picture something Oriental, novel, and poetical, which pleases the fancy, and transports it to the desert." — VALERY.

Page 111. *Strains perchance to maiden's hearing sweeter than this verse of mine.*

The Belfry of Bruges.

Page 116. *Might the gross Bourbon — he that sleeps in spite.*

Written at Naples, during the reign of the King that bombarded Palermo.

Page 119. *Thou Scottish Tweed, a sacred streamlet now!*

"As I was dressing on the morning of Monday, the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm, — every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. 'Lockhart,' he said, 'I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man; — be virtuous, — be religious, — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.' He paused, and I said, 'Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?' — 'No,' said he; 'don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night. God bless you all!' With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained a new leave of absence from their posts; and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half

past one P. M., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day: so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear — the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles — was distinctly audible, as we knelt around the bed; and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes." — LOCKHART'S *Life of Sir Walter Scott.*

Page 143. THE OLD HOUSE IN SUDBURY TWENTY YEARS AFTERWARDS.

This Old House is the one celebrated by Longfellow as the Wayside Inn. It was the first large farmhouse and hostelry opened on the high road between Boston and the Connecticut River, and is still occupied (1872), though not as a tavern. It was always, from its erection in 1690, the estate of one family, whose last direct descendants were Lyman Howe and Adam his brother.

The former passed through life with a strange fear of lightning; but the dreaded stroke never came until many years after his death, when the structure was somewhat damaged.

Page 144. *On the rainbow-colored pane.*

Prismatic-hued from extreme age.

Page 221. *So that a stupor on the spirit stole*
From things unknown.

"E stupor m' eran le cose non conte."

DANTE: *Purgatorio*, xv. 12.

Page 229. *To Dionysius and his tyrant throng.*

Dante, in the twelfth Canto of the Inferno, describes the tyrants who outraged humanity as plunged in a river of boiling blood, while Centaurs gallop about the stream, shooting them with arrows. Among these sinners he numbers Attila, Dionysius, Obizzo of Este, and Ezzelino, the tyrant of Padua.

Page 237. *Both creatures, covered with one furry stole.*

"Both *beasts* furred over with a single stole," or, "two beasts under one skin," would be nearer to Dante's expression; but the worthy Jesuit, the Padre Venturi, cries out upon this, "*Motto plebeo, e da mercato vecchio!*"

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